

Tajik Clashes Continue Despite Cease-Fire

MOSCOW — Intense clashes continued Saturday in central Tajikistan, violating a cease-fire between the government and Islamic opposition forces, Interfax reported citing Russian military sources.

Unconfirmed reports said 20 government troops had been killed in a clash at Lahidzhar, 130 kilometres (78 miles) east of the capital Dushanbe, the agency said, adding that the opposition had continued to make territorial gains. (Contd on Pg.14)



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Hezbollah Denies Firing Rockets at Israel

BEIRUT — The Hezbollah group denied Saturday having fired rockets into northern Israel on Friday. "Hezbollah had nothing to do with Katyusha rockets being fired into northern occupied Palestine," a spokesman said, using the group's term for Israel.

Officials of Palestinian organizations opposed to any deal with Israel also denied responsibility for the rockets, the first since a cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah went into effect on April 26.

(Contd on Pg.14)

Leader: Persian Gulf Security, Inseparable From Iran's Security

TEHRAN — The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said here on Saturday that the security of the Persian Gulf is inseparable from that of Iran.

"Any aggression on and attempts to make Islamic Iran insecure will make the Persian Gulf more insecure for the enemies of the Iranian nation, particularly those living in glasshouses," the commander-in-chief of the armed forces warned.

In a meeting with thousands of commanders and personnel of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC), Ayatollah Khamenei said that the Iranian people are protecting the security of the Persian Gulf.

"Neither the people nor the government of Iran has ever caused insecurity in the Persian Gulf but some powers inside and outside the region have caused troubles and insecurity for us and others," the Leader said.

The outside powers and their followers in the region should know that the security of the Islamic Republic of Iran cannot be separated from that of the region, the Leader said, warning "The Iranian nation will never let anyone's blow go unanswered and will vehemently respond to any measures of satanic powers to make the region insecure."

Terming the diplomacy of the U.S. administration as "weak and invalid", Ayatollah Khamenei said that Washington's attempts to find faults with Iran carry no weight.

The stability of the sensitive region of the Persian Gulf depends mostly on Islamic Iran and its Muslim nation, the Leader said, adding "The day when Iran enjoys security and calm, the region will be calm too."

The enemies of Islam are always trying to engage the sacred Islamic system in a bid to make its bulwark shaky and penetrable, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said.

Referring to the tragic events being created by the U.S. administration and its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the four corners of the world, the Leader castigated Washington and other arrogant powers for their indifference towards the massacre of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Palestine and Iraq.



"Those claiming to be advocates of human rights have shown that they do not care about the blood of people shed unjustly in Palestine or the massacre of thousands of people in Halabja by the Baathist regime of Iraq while at the same time accusing the Islamic Republic of Iran of human rights abuses.

"They (so called advocates of human rights) by issuing resolutions and taking advantage of the United Nations and its Security Council go ahead with their political and cultural antagonism against the Islamic Republic of Iran," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

Ayatollah Khamenei also termed the struggle of the Western culture with the Muslim nation of Iran as a long term and deep struggle.

"Resisting the aggressions and plots of the enemies of Islam requires a strength originating from commitment and a sense of responsibility based on divine duties," he said.

The meeting took place on the auspicious occasion of the birth anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of the infallible Household of Prophet Mohammad (S), which is celebrated in Iran as the IRGC Day.

The Leader described Imam Hussein (AS) as one of the closest and most prominent angels of the

(Contd on Pg.14)

Mousavian: Iran, Germany Determined to Protect Excellent Relations

TEHRAN — Iranian Ambassador to Bonn Hussein Mousavian said on Saturday that high ranking Iranian and German officials are determined to protect Tehran-Bonn relations at optimum level and will not allow the excellent relations to be strained.

Speaking to IRNA, Mousavian said relations between the two countries have not been shaped overnight and therefore they cannot be destroyed overnight.

He said the initiative taken by the Iranian president and German chancellor to control the Mykonos crisis was the best proof that neither of the two governments was willing to let their historical relations be affected by the immature claims of a prosecutor.

Mousavian said that German Judiciary has been provided with documents on the real identity of the so-called Witness-C which are under investigation by it.

He said examination of the documents would prove that the individual who made such charges against Iran is a fugitive



MOUSAVIAN

fraudulent person and a robber. He also maintained that the new information would change the court's verdict.

Mousavian said Iran wants Germany to prevent the court proceedings from being influenced by domestic and foreign sources.

Asked about the impacts of the world arrogance's anti-Iran propaganda campaign on German public opinion, he said despite 17 years of propaganda campaign against Iran, the German people have moderate approach towards Iran.

He said the Iranian people are interested in having good relations

(Contd on Pg.14)

Bildt Hits at Serb Plan to Try Izetbegovic

BELGRADE — International envoy to Bosnia Carl Bildt hit out Friday at plans by the Bosnian Serbs to try Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic for alleged war crimes, the Bosnian Serb news agency reported.

The authorities of the Republika Srpska (RS), the Bosnian Serb entity which shares control of Bosnia with a Muslim-Croat Federation under the Dayton peace agreement, have set December 24 for the "trial" of Izetbegovic, a Muslim.

Speaking after talks with Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavsic in the Serb-held northern Bosnian city of Banja Luka, Bildt said: "Local authorities have no right to try or declare anyone a war criminal."

He called on all sides in Bosnia to respect the authority of the International War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague, adding: "It would be preferable if all persons charged with war crimes went to the Hague themselves and proved their innocence"

Plavsic's predecessor Radovan Karadzic and former Bosnian Serb

(Contd on Pg.14)

Head of UN Peacekeeping Is New Secretary-General

Tehran Times Service

UNITED NATIONS — Kofi Annan of Ghana, an urbane, soft-spoken insider who runs United Nations Peacekeeping, was chosen early this week by the Security Council to become the world body's seventh secretary-general.



ANNAN

Security Council President Francesco Paolo Fulci of Italy announced the 15-member council agreed on Friday by acclamation on Annan as the successor to Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Egypt, whose attempt to serve a second

(Contd on Pg.14)

EU Ministers Wrap Up Summit After Crucial Single Currency Accord

DUBLIN — European Union leaders were wrapping up a two-day summit here Saturday with proposals on drug trafficking, organized crime and unemployment, after reaching a crucial accord lifting the last technical obstacle to launch of a single European currency in 1999.

The deal on a "stability pact" to enforce fiscal discipline among countries which adopt the single currency, or Euro, was hammered

(Contd on Pg.14)



UNITED NATIONS, United Nations: A file photo released by the United Nations shows Kofi Annan of Ghana, UN undersecretary-general for peacekeeping, at UN headquarters July 24. Diplomats said December 13 that Annan is certain of being elected the next UN chief after France lifted its objections to his candidacy.

(AFP PHOTO)

Congratulations

Today is the birth anniversary of Hazrat Abu al-Fazl Abbas (AS), the brother of Imam Hussein (AS), the Third Imam of the Infallible Household of Prophet Mohammad (S). Today also marks the Day of Janbaz (the War Disabled).

The Tehran Times personnel congratulate all the Muslims the world over on this great occasion.

Editor

Condolences

The management and staff of Tehran Times extend deepest condolences to the family and relatives of the late Professor Seyed Vahid Akhtar who passed away this week. His unselfish dedication to the cause of education as a professor of the Dept. of Philosophy of Aligarh Muslim University will never again touch the lives of those whom he has left behind. But his memory, like the seeds of ideas that he has planted, will remain forever.

For all the inspiration and joy that he gave unselfishly during his lifetime, we dedicate these lines and pray the Almighty will give strength and comfort to those he left behind.

Special condolences also go to Hassan Vahid, a Kayhan employee and son of the late professor Ahtar.

Editor

TEHRAN TIMES

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In the Name of God

Whomsoever Allah causes to err, there is no guide for him; and He leaves them alone in their inordinacy, blindly wandering on.

(HOLY QORAN) (7:186)

OPINION

ICJ Must Preserve Its Independence in the Face of Bully States

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has ruled that it has the jurisdiction to hear the dispute between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States over the destruction of the Iranian oil platfroms by the U.S. warships during the Iraqi imposed war.

The court's decision is considered a victory for Iran and a crucial step toward vindicating the rights of small countries vis-a-vis bully states. It is worth remembering that, in early 1950s, the ICJ did not give in either to the pressures of Britain in its dispute with Iran over oil concessions.

Indeed, the ICJ is competent to hear any case taken to it by any litigant who accepts its jurisdiction over that particular case or who recognizes its compulsory jurisdiction under the Optional Clause. To reach a decision, the court applies (1) treaties; (2) international customs; (3) general principles of law; and (4) judicial decisions.

So far as the Iranian lawsuit against the U.S. attack is concerned, there is a treaty which must be the basis of a sound judegment, i.e., the 1955 Treaty of Amity. Based on the above treaty, the U.S. is required to preserve the Persian Gulf security as well as the Iranian assets there. Unfortunately, instead of preserving the security of the region, the U.S. attacked the Iranian oil installations in the Persian Gulf in October 1987 and April 1988 in clear violation of the terms of the treaty and the international rules and regulations.

The ICJ has thus far taken a firm step towards exercising justice. However, the major portion of the judicial task is yet to be tackled by the court. Most probably, the U.S. will try every leverage to hinder the ICJ from following an impartial line while dealing with the case. Nonetheless, the credibility of the court hinges on the unbiased attitude of the ICJ judges and, undoubtedly, the politicization of the lawsuit filed by Iran will harm the international image of the court. Above all, the ICJ's raison d'etre is to substitute the rule of law for the use of force in settling international disputes.

Thus, if by chance the court's impartial stand is weakened under the U.S. pressures, the very same grounds for its existence will be called into question.

Iran Welcomes Rakhmanov-Nouri Agreement

TEHRAN — Iran welcomed the accord signed between President Imomali Rakhmanov of Tajikistan and leader of the opposition Abdullah Nouri.

Deputy Foreign Minister for Euro-American Affairs, Mahmoud Vaezi, further told IRNA on Friday that Tehran supports the progress made in the meetings between the two sides.

On December 10, Rakhmanov and Nouri agreed to hold official talks on December 19. Stressing that war is not the right forumula for the Tajik crisis, Vaezi said direct talks are the only way to put an end to confrontations in that country. Iran will not spare any effort to help establish peace in Tajikistan, he said.

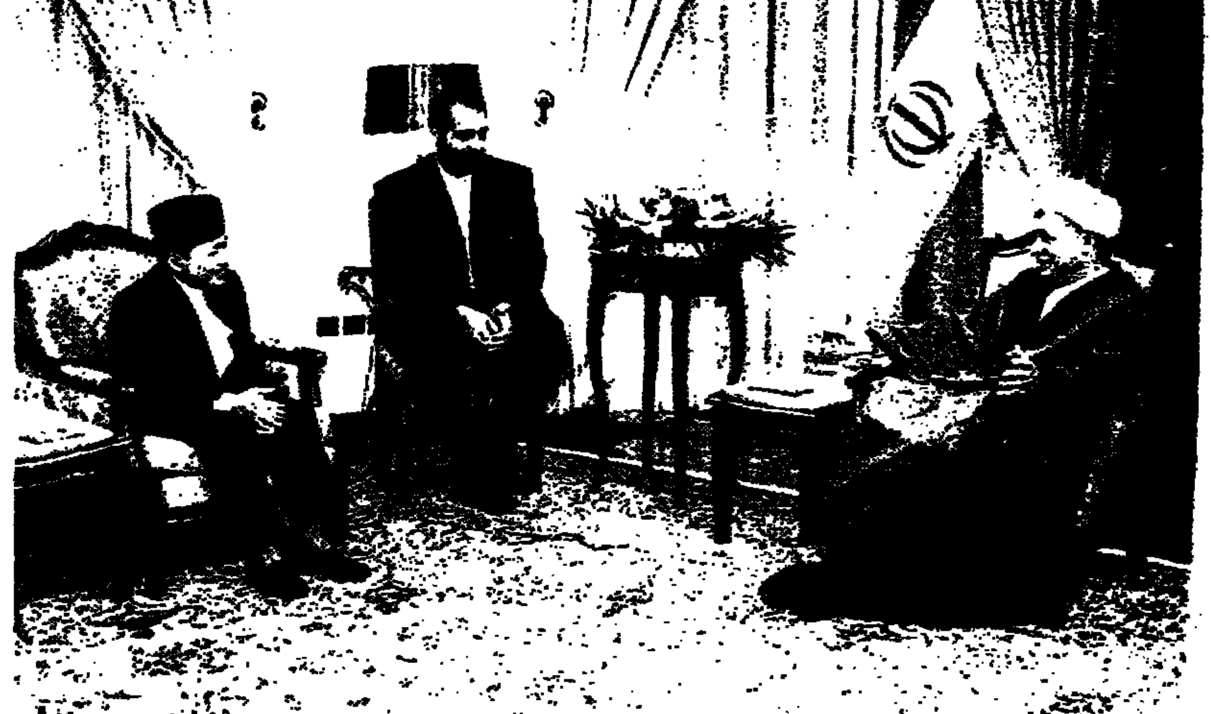
Vaezi further pointed out that Iran supports the document which was prepared by representatives of the two sides in Tehran some time ago and is to be signed by Rakhmanov and Nouri on December 19. The document sets the framework for peace in Tajikistan.

The deputy foreign minister also condemned the Thursday bomb explosions in the Tajik capital and said such actions are futile effort by "opponents of peace in Tajikistan."

(IRNA)

President Receives Bruneian Minister of Education

Tehran Times Service



TEHRAN — President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani here on Saturday received the visiting Bruneian Minister of Education, A.D. Abdolaziz.

Conveying the warm greetings of the people and Sultan of Brunei to the Iranian people and government, Abdolaziz described his meetings with the Iranian officials as 'fruitful'. He also pointed at the significant achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran in scientific, educational and cultural fields and stressed that his country is eager to share Iran's experiences in these areas.

The Bruneian minister also noted that, during his visits to the Iranian cultural centers and educational institutes, he was fully acquainted with Iran's capabilities and potentials and its achievements in scientific, cultural and educational fields.

President Rafsanjani, in turn, said that the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sultanate of Brunei share a great number of religious and cultural commonalities and that the exchange of views and expansion of bilateral ties would be beneficial for both Muslim nations.

The Iranian president further voiced Iran's readiness to upgrade political and economic cooperation with the Sultanate of Brunei.

Iran Urges Int'l Community to Render Aid to Afghanistan

UNITED NATIONS, New York — Iran's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Majid Takht Ravanchi here Friday called on the international community to render its assistance to the people of Afghanistan with the hope that those who have survived the scourge of war can survive the hunger and disease.

Commenting on critical situation in Afghanistan, he noted that the continuation of war in Afghanistan has not only caused destruction of the country's infrastructure but has also created a source of instability and concern in the region and a threat to international peace and security.

Addressing the 51st session of the UN General Assembly on the situation in Afghanistan, he stressed that the destructive side-effects of the civil strife in Afghanistan have exceeded its national borders and constituted serious sources of insecurity and instability in the region and beyond.

"We believe, as we have indicated in the past, that the crisis in Afghanistan has no military solution," Takht Ravanchi said adding, it is totally unacceptable that in Afghanistan some policies and practices that are clearly un-Islamic and even anti-Islamic, in form or in nature, are conducted and attributed to Islam. Referring to Iran's humanitarian aids rendered to Afghan people and hosting millions of their refugees during the last 18 years, he stressed that as a neighboring country, the Islamic Republic has a great deal of concern over the causes and consequences of instability and insecurity in the region and, therefore, cannot remain indifferent towards developments that might affect Iran's national interests.

As to recent regional conference on Afghanistan which was convened in Tehran last October, he said the conference provided a unique opportunity for its attendants to express their collective support for the ongoing UN peace-making efforts and to send a strong signal to the Afghan warring factions that the countries in the region totally reject the vicious circle of war and violence in Afghanistan.

The task of the international community as a whole, and of the regional countries in particular is to stand firm against any idea which might undermine the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Afghanistan, the Iranian envoy underlined.

Pledging full support for sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan, he rejected foreign interference in Afghan domestic affairs, especially through the supply of arms. Takht Ravanchi called for ending hostilities and working towards national reconciliation.

Supporting active engagement of the UN Special Mission to Afghanistan, the Iranian official stressed that the mission should continue its efforts with even greater strength and impartiality to find a political solution through maintaining and establishing contact with all groups in Afghanistan and the neighboring countries.

(IRNA)

Large Scale Maneuver to Be Conducted This Year

TEHRAN — A large scale maneuver codenamed Tariq-al-Qods (path of victory) will be conducted by the end of the current Iranian year (March 20, 1997), it was announced here Saturday.

Brigadier Rahim Safavi, Deputy Commander of the Islamic Revolution's Guard Corps (IRGC) added that more than 120,000 combatants from the ground, air and naval forces as well as the volunteer units (Basij Forces) will participate in the war game. The aim of the military exercise is to strengthen the combat readiness of the IRGC personnel in defending the Islamic Revolution as well as the values and achievements of the Islamic Republic, he underlined.

Tariq-al-Qods maneuver will be the largest exercise to be conducted by the IRGC personnel this year.

(IRNA)

Charges Against Iran Fabricated by Zionists

BEIRUT — A prominent Lebanese alim on Friday condemned anti-Iran propaganda policies launched by the U.S. and the Zionist regime and described charges on Iran'a involvement in the Dhahran explosion as baseless.

Addressing worshipers at Friday prayers in Southern Beirut, he said the allegations are part of the efforts made by Zionism and world arrogance to mar the image of the Islamic Republic on the one hand and to sow discord between Iran and the Arab states of the Persian Gulf on the other.

From political and security point of view, it is not to the interest of Iran and the Arab states of the Persian Gulf to get involved in political and security crises, he said.

Sheikh Fazlallah stressed that the allegations on Iran's involvement in the Dhahran explosion were masterminded by the Zionists to deviate the public opinion from Israel's policy of extending Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestine.

He also refuted allegations levelled against Iran on training terrorist groups in Lebanon.

These charges are aimed at making the situation in Lebanon look unstable from security point of view and thus prevent any financial aid which may be proposed by the participants in the conference of Lebanon's friends, to open in Washington next Monday.

(IRNA)

Irano-Syrian Relations Growing

TEHRAN — Relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Syria which have always served the interests of both nations are growing, Syrian Ambassador to Tehran Ahmad al-Hassan told IRNA on Thursday.

(Contd on Pg. 15)

U.S. Presence in Region, Posing Threat to Interests of All

TEHRAN — A morning daily here Saturday commented on the renewed U.S. allegations on Iran's involvement in the last June bombing of the U.S. military complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, and wrote that the accusations were based on the unfounded fabrications of the American press.

The White House, the Pentagon and other U.S. intelligence agencies know well that there is no evidence or document available on the involvement of a foreign party, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the bombing, stressed the daily *Iran* in its editorial.

It further noted that they even know that forging any document in this connection or levelling accusations against others will neither be an easy task nor to their interest.

In June last year, explosion at a military complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, claimed lives of 19 Americans and injured 250 others.

The Islamic Republic of Iran by strongly rejecting any involvement in the incident has unveiled the U.S. objectives, the article said, adding that the stance adopted by Iran has exposed hidden interests of the White House rulers. Perhaps the attempt to accuse a foreign country of having hand in the explosion is a bid to cover up the weakness of the security system at the complex and an effort to deviate the public opinion, remarked the editorial.

However, the Americans know well that immature presumptions and, even worse, "throwing stone at the glass palaces of the region" are unwise and dangerous to a great extent, *Iran* wrote in its article.

In the meantime, the silence of the Saudi officials is meaningful and considered as unfriendly, the daily noted. It recommended the rulers of Riyadh not to provide an opportunity for the "younger parties", noting that presence of the U.S. forces in the region will pose a threat to the interests of all.

Everyday the U.S. Army embarks on a mission and the blonde U.S. soldiers pull the trigger under a forged excuse which will entail deplorable consequences for all, concluded the editorial.

(IRNA)



Liquid Gas From Aghar, Dalan to Be Transfered to Bidboland

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Operations were launched on Thursday to transfer liquid gas from Aghar and Dalan districts at provincial town of Firoozabad to the liquified gas refinery of Bidboland in southwestern province of Khouzestan.

The executive head of the project Abdolreza Hossein-Nejad said on Thursday that 17 million cubic meters of gas would be transfered daily once first phase of the project goes on stream, IRNA reported.

Hossein-Nejad said the project had cost about Rls.500 billion since 1368 (March 21, 1989-March 20, 1988) and is expected to absorb Rls.200 billion more within the next three years.

He added that the pipeline would be 360 kms long.

Kish Airport Ready for Landing of Wide-Bodied Aircraft

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - The Internatinal Airport of Kish Island is now open to wide-bodied airplanes, said the airport director in Kish Friday.

Nosratollah Yousefi further said that according to the standards set by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the airport can from now on receive Boeing 747 and Airbus airplanes.

The modernization and rehabilitation of the airport has cost Rls.6,000 million, he added.

Up to 12 flights take place daily at the airport at present which with the introduction of the facilities will be increased to 40 flights a day.

Over 1,500 passengers fly to Kish everyday.

4th Int'l Fair on Leather, Textile Machinery Opens in Tehran

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Fourth Tehran International Leather and Textile Machinery Fair opened here Saturday at the permanet grounds for the international fairs.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the fair, head of the Export Promotion Center (EPC) Ali Saeedloo said that the country's textile and leather export revenues amounted to $214 million in 1995 and $270 million in 1994.

Saeedloo underlined that the textile and leather industries are among the oldest and most important industries in the country and that these two industries play a pivotal role in the country's export sector.

Referring to the developments made so far in textile and leather industries, the head of EPC noted that the current fair enables the owners of the industrial units to be informed of latest achievements in this field.

Held over an area of 8500 sqm, the Fourth Tehran International Fair on Leather and Textile Machinery is aimed at familiarizing



some 67 domestic firms with the latest achievements in the textile and leather industries. In addition, some 51 foreign textile and leather producers form Italy, Canada, Turkey, China, Japan, Germany, Britain, Czech Republic, Spain, India, Switzerland, Netherlands, South Korea, Pakistan, Taiwan, Austria, Sweden and France are participating in the fair.

Some modern textile and weaving machines as well as the equipment for designing, embroidery and dyeing are put on display at the fair, which will be held until December 18.

8 Million Tons of Oil Recovered in Azerbaijan

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Since early this year 8,351,900 tons of oil have been recovered in the Azerbaijan Republic and the plan has been overfulfilled by 0.4 percent, Socar's planning department told Turan news agency yesterday.

Oil recovery for the same period in 1995 stood at 8,444,300 tons, added the report.

Out of the total output, 1,455,700 tons of oil have been recovered on shore and 6,896,200 tons in the Azeri section of the Caspian Sea. In November 1996, Socar recovered 756,600 tons of oil, fulfilling the plan by nearly 100 percent. In November 1995 oil recovery stood at 718,900 tons).

615,600 tons have been recovered by offshore oilmen and 141,000 tons by onshore oilmen.

Azerbaijan Signs $2b Oil and Gas Contract

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN -- Azerbaijan on Saturday signed a contract worth two billion dollars to develop two oil and gas fields in the Caspian Sea with an international consortium, cutting out its powerful Russian neighbor for the first time, Russia news agencies reported from Moscow, as quoted by AFP.

The contract involves the Dan-Ulduzu and Ashrafi fields, around 60 kilometres (35 miles) southeast of the capital Baku, which have reserves estimated at 150 million tons of oil and between 30 and 50 billion cubic metres of natural gas.

Shares in the consortium are held by the U.S. companies Amoco (30 percent) and Unocal (25.5 percent), Itochu of Japan (20 percent) and the Saudi company Delta (4.5 percent). The Azerbaijani National Oil Company Socar also holds 20 percent.

The foreign partners paid an "entrance ticket" totalling around 75 million dollars, the Russian news agencies said.

There are no Russian companies in the consortium, unlike past contracts drawn up by Azerbaijan, which had always included the Russian oil giant, Lukoil.

However, sources quoted by Interfax news agency, said Lukoil could acquire an interest indirectly because Socar planned to link the development of Dan-Ulduzu and Ashrafi with the nearby Karabakh field.

Lukoil is the biggest shareholder in the consortium exploiting the Karabakh field at 32.5 percent.

Azerbaijani President Gaidar Aliyev was present for the signing of the contract in the Azerbaijani capital Baku, which will have to be ratified by Parliament before it enters into force. The contract will be valid for 25 years.

It is the fourth major contract signed by Baku with international consortiums since 1994 to exploit Caspian oil.

The first "contract of the century" worth eight billion dollars was signed in September 1994, followed by one worth three billion dollars in November 1995 and a third worth four billion last June.

The collapse of the former Soviet Union has rendered obsolete the treaties of 1921 and 1940 which divided up the Caspian Sea between Iran and the Soviet Union.

Dollar Rallies on Mark Weakness From EU Currency Stability Pact

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - The dollar seesawed in global foreign exchange trading before shooting higher Friday on news of an agreement among European Union finance ministers to stabilize the planned Euro currency.

New hope for a viable euro undermined the mark. Traders who had incorrectly bet on a falling dollar scrambled to buy the U.S. currency to minimize losses. That pushed the dollar even higher in what's known as a short-covering rally, AFP reported.

"There was a rush to get in and buy some dollars," said Victor Polce, corporate foreign exchange manager at the New York branch of Commerzbank.

In late New York trading, the dollar cost 1.5558 marks, up sharply from 1.5423 Thursday. The dollar cost 113.95 yen, up from 113.27. The pound cost $1.6554, down from dlrs 1.6576.

The dollar initially strengthened in early Asian dealings on rumors that Japanese officials want an exchange rate of 120 yen to the dollar, a level of yen weakness last seen nearly four years ago, in order to make Japan's exports more affordable abroad and help its economic recovery.

The rumors were said to come from the newsletter of Johnson Smick International, a Washington consulting firm founded by former federal reserve vice chairman Manuel Johnson and a former congressional aide, David Smick. But the firm said the rumors it was reporting such information were false.

Later in U.S. dealings the dollar fell, rose and fell again, mimicking the stock market in a pattern that's recurred since Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan jolted the markets last week by suggesting stocks were overvalued.

But currency traders diverted their attention from the stock market when EU finance ministers reached an agreement aimed at ensuring the euro's stability after it debuts January, 1999. Word of the pact at an EU summit in Dublin, Ireland, led to a selloff in the mark, which will be replaced by the euro as Europe's dominant currency.

"When the stock market started off down we sold the dollar, when it came back we bought the dollar, when it went down we sold the dollar again," said Thomas Lapinski, chief dealer at MTB Bank Corp. In New York. "When the stability pact was announced, the dollar just took off, and it was pretty much one way up after that."

Under the pact, countries that violate the strict fiscal criteria for participating in the currency plan will be fined unless they can show they are suffering a recession, defined as a 2 percent drop in gross domestic product. When declines are less than 2 percent, exemptions can be negotiated.

Broad terms of the pact were seen as at least a partial victory for Germany, which had wanted tough rules to assure the euro's stability, while other countries wanted more flexibility. The Germans had argued the euro would lose value if wayward participants weren't sternly disciplined.

"They leaned a little more toward the German plan of strict criteria and fines if you don't meet them," said Roger Chapin, Foreign Exchange Manager at Bank One in Columbus, Ohio. "If they'd gone with the loose things, people would have been suspect of the euro and how good it really is."

Other late dollar rates in New York, compared with late Thursday: 1.3244 Swiss francs, up from 1.3136= 5.2410 French francs, up from 5.2170= 1,530.00 Italian lire, up from 1,526.50= 1.3627 Canadian dollars, up from 1.3579.

Japan, U.S. Avert Insurance War by 11th-Hour Accord

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Japan and the United States averted a full-out conflict over liberalization of Japan's 375-billion-dollar insurance market Saturday by hammering out a basic accord in the eleventh hour.

Japanese Finance Minister Hiroshi Mitsuzuka said he had reached the accord with U.S. action trade representative Charlene Barshefsky by telephone ahead of a mutually agreed deadline on Sunday for the insurance talks, an AFP dispatch reported.

The telephone conversation followed two rounds of talks Saturday between the two key people in the long-running dispute, during which Japan put forward new proposals.

Before departing, Barshefsky told a news conference the proposals were "potentially quite significant" but did not make any firm commitment.

Mitsuzuka told a news conference later he had telephoned Barshefsky while she was waiting at Tokyo's Narita airport for a flight home.

"Both parties confirmed that they had reached a basic agreement," the finance minister said.

Mitsuzuka said details of the agreement would be worked out Sunday between Eisuke Sakakibara, head of the ministry's international finance bureau, and Ira Shapiro, the senior counsel to the office of the U.S. trade representative.

The dispute centers on the entry of additional Japanese insurance firms into the so-called third sector of the market, which includes policies for injury, nursing care, cancer and hospitalization.

Foreign firms are already strong in this area.

Under the basic accord, non-life insurance units of Japanese life insurers would be given access to the personal injury insurance market on January 1 next year, Japanese officials said.

But certain restrictions will be imposed on the access in consideration of foreign insurers until 2001 at the latest after Japan's primary life and nonlife sectors are deregulated, they said.

Under present rules, sales of injury insurance in Japan are limited to non-life insurers. But Japanese domestic life insurers want to gain entry to this market through their subsidiaries.

Washington has insisted radical deregulation in the third sector should be postponed until the primary life and nonlife sectors — 95 percent of the market — are substantially liberalised, citing a 1994 bilateral accord on Japan's 375 billion dollar a year insurance market.

The basic accord will also commit Tokyo to deregulate non-life insurance premiums, the officials said.

Japan will also gradually deregulate before 2001 some insurance sectors, now reserved for foreign and small domestic life insurers, the officials said. Such areas include cancer and other medical insurance markets.

Tokyo had moved to allow subsidiaries of big Japanese life insurers to enter the third sector from January 1 and had threatened to go ahead with the move even if the row with Washington is not settled.

The United States, in turn, had threatened retaliatory trade sanctions.

Before the announcement of the basic accord, Barshefsky said "because this is a complex area and the proposals are new, we need to evaluate them and make a determination whether primary sector deregulation would be sufficient."

"I can't give you a prognosis because there is significant evaluation that has to be done of the proposals made but we do appreciate the efforts of the government of Japan with respect to this issue," she said.

The final rounds of talks followed intermittent but unsuccesful talks Thursday and Friday between Shapiro and Sakakibara.





CHILDREN'S PAGE

A GREEN PLANT

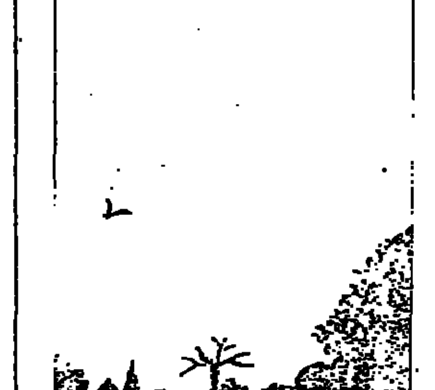
It was spring in the city.
Miguel sat on the roof every day.
He liked to watch the cars down below.
But the missed living on the old farm.
One day Miguel found a small plant growing on the roof.
It smelled like a tomato plant.
Miguel thought, "Maybe it will grow big.
Maybe there will be tomatoes on it."
Every day Miguel would hurry home from school to see his green plant.
It didn't seem to grow.
Then the leaves began to turn yellow.
"The plant won't live," thought Miguel.
"I wonder what's wrong with it.
I'll ask my teacher."
The next day Miguel asked his teacher about the tomato plant.
She gave him a book about plants.
There was a page about a tomato plant.
It showed how the seed must have good soil, sunshine, and water to grow.
Next it showed how little flowers come out on the plant.
Last it showed how little green tomatoes grow where the flowers were.
Miguel got a big box on his way home.
He got some good soil to fill the box.
Then he hurried up to the roof.
Miguel dug up his plant.
He put the long root into the good soil.
That night it rained.
In a week Miguel's plant was straight and tall.
There were new green leaves on it.
Miguel watched his plant grow.
He put a stick in the box to hold the plant up.
The plant grew little yellow flowers.
Soon little green tomatoes began to grow inside the flowers.
Then the yellow flowers died.
Many weeks passed.
The green tomatoes grew bigger and bigger.
The rain helped them grow.
The sun turned them red.
Soon there were many red tomatoes.
Miguel picked the biggest tomatoes.
He cut some up for dinner.
Miguel's family liked the fresh tomatoes.
The next spring Miguel's family helped him plant a garden.
It was the finest roof garden in the city.



Why Does the Sky Appear Blue?

Our earth is surrounded by a blanket of air, which is called the atmosphere. It is mainly composed of nitrogen, oxygen, carbon-dioxide, dust particles, water vapor and other gases. The light that comes to us from the sun has to travel through the atmosphere.

The sun is the main source of light for us. When the sunlight enters the atmosphere, it falls upon the dust particles, water and air molecules. These molecules scatter the sunlight in all the directions. This is why, there is light all around after the sunrise.



We know that the sunlight is a mixture of seven colors: violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. When the sunrays collide with the air molecules, the violet, indigo and blue colors are scattered most and red is scattered least. Therefore, when we look at the sky the light that enters our eyes mainly consists of violet, indigo and blue colors. The mixture of these three colors is almost blue. That is why the sky appears blue.

If the earth had no atmosphere, the sky whould have just appeared dark. This fact becomes very clear when we look at the sky from the surface of the moon. It appears dark since there is no atmosphere at the moon. Similarly, the sky appears dark when we look from a spacecraft, because there are no scattering particles in the space.

Riddle

I have a little sister,
They call her peep, peep;
She wades the waters
deep, deep, deep;
She climbs the mountains
High, high, high;
Poor little creature, she
has but one eye.

(A Star)

Mailbox Wren

By Frances Frost



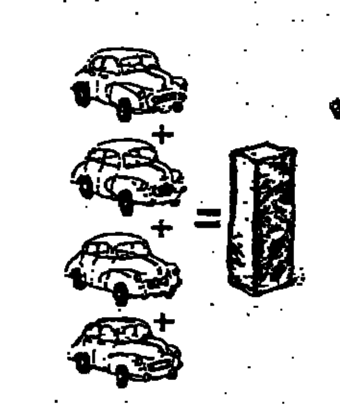
The wren inspects
Her garden house,
Turns up her beak,
And darts to choose

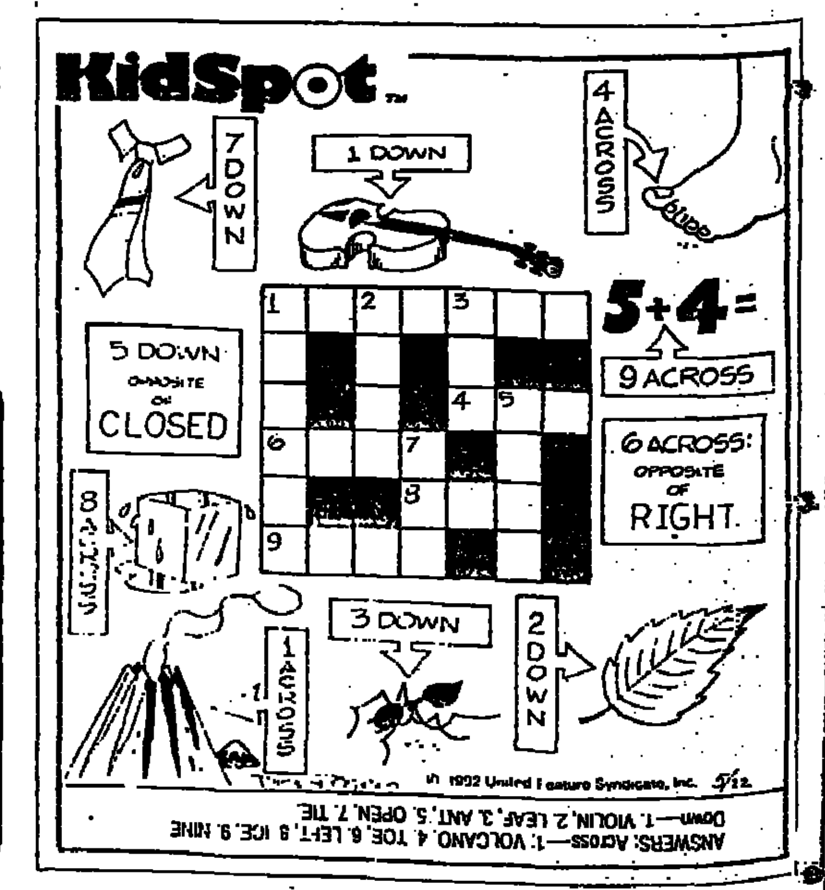
My mailbox gleaming
On its post.
There, her eggs are
Small as stamps, almost.

What, Who, When?

How High Is the Great Pyramid of Cheops?

The great pyramid of Cheops is 160 meters high. The sides are 250 meters long and the area of the pyramid is 13 hectares. It is made of 2.300.000 blocks of stone. One block of stone weighs two and a half tons (four small cars weigh about two and a half tons). so the blocks of stone were very heavy. About 100,000 people worked on this pyramid.







Tehran Times Service

FOOTBALL

BARCELONA, Spain: Croatian international midfielder Robert Prosinecki moved to Spanish club Sevilla from Barcelona on Friday for a fee of 1.3 million dollars. The 27-year-old midfielder, who played in the Euro '96 and who won the UEFA Cup in 1991 with the Belgrade Red Stars, played for Real Madrid and Real Oviedo before joining Barcelona.

MIDDLESBROUGH, England: Maverick Brazilian star Emerson will make his first league appearance in seven weeks for English premiership Middlesbrough against Liverpool at Anfield on Saturday.

The midfielder returned late from Rio de Janeiro earlier in the week with fresh doubts about his future after going absent without leave for the third time since the start of the season. The return of Emerson, who also served a three-match suspension for exceeding 21 disciplinary points, is a boost for Boro whose injury-hit squad have picked up just four points from their last 11 league games.

Meanwhile the club's 28-year-old Italian striker Fabrizio Ravanelli has rubbished reports that he wants to leave and has said he has issued high court proceedings for libel against the *Daily Mirror* over articles published about him earlier in December. Ravanelli is the club's leading scorer with 16 goals.

STOCKHOLM: Sampdoria's Swedish coach Sven Goran Eriksson is on the verge of signing a five-year contract with Blackburn and he has been told he can bring Roberto Mancini with him. The English premiership club have reportedly promised the Serie A manager 20 million pounds to buy in new talent, with the first on Eriksson's list being Sampdoria's striker Mancini.

TENNIS

NEW YORK: Martina Navratilova, the only player to lead two different countries to Fed Cup titles, has been appointed captain of the United States team for 1997. The 40-year-old former world No. 1, who was never beaten in 37 matches (20 singles and 17 doubles) in the annual women's team event, replaces Billie Jean King. King was in charge of the successful 1996 United States side which won the Fed Cup for a 15th time by beating Spain in Atlantic City in September. Navratilova played for Czechoslovakia when they won the trophy in 1975. She became a U.S. citizen in 1981.

SKIING

VAL D'ISERE, France: The Women's World Cup Giant Slalom scheduled here on Friday was canceled due to bad visibility. The decision was taken after two skiers tested the piste and found snowflakes were sticking to their skiing glasses hampering visibility.

GOLF

HONG KONG: Robert Stephens of Australia and American Gerry Norquist recorded identical scores for the second day running to share the lead after two rounds of the Omega APGA Championship here Friday. They followed up their course record 63s on Thursday by going round four-under-par in 66 on Friday.

CRICKET

BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe: A stubborn century by Zimbabwe test opener Mark Dekker could not prevent England from completing a 115-run victory over Matabeleland at Bulaway athletics club here on Friday.

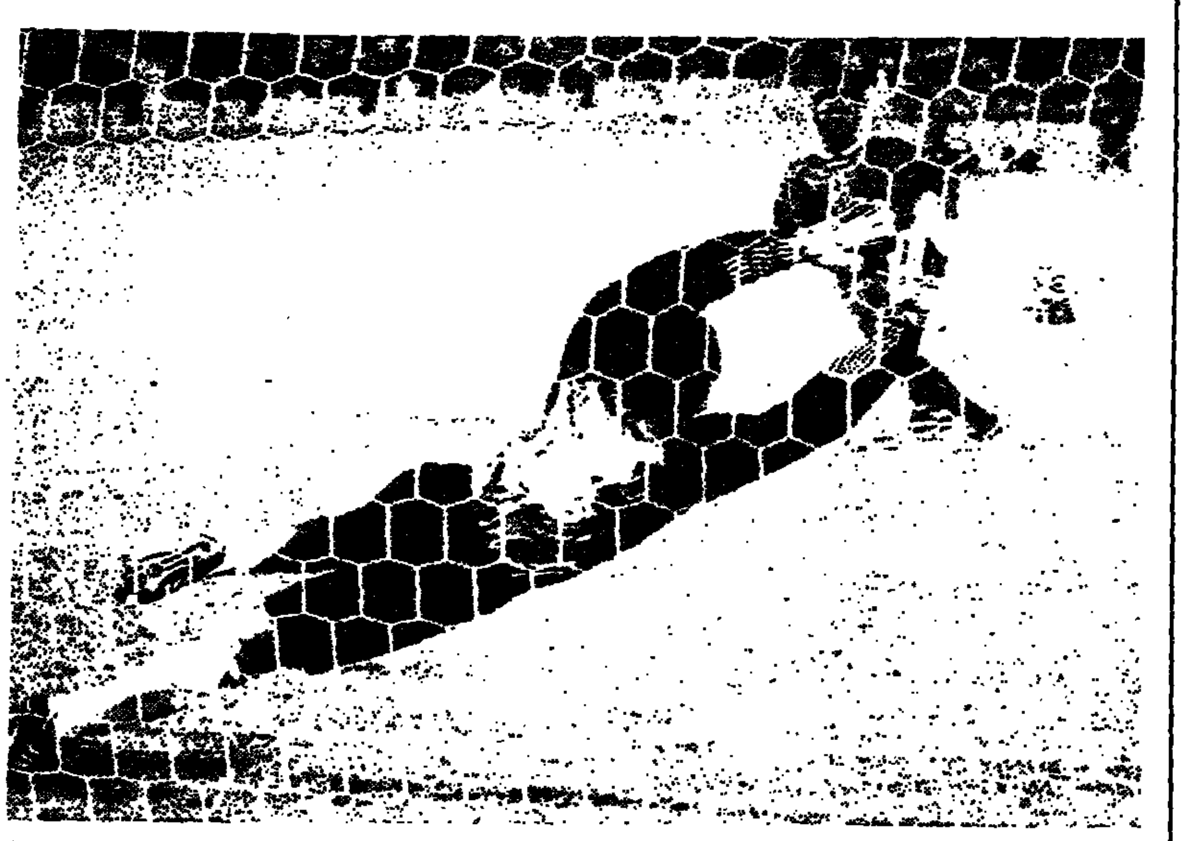
The left-handed Dekker stroked a gritty 104 in four and a three-quarter hours at the Crease, but failed to prevent England winning their opening First Class match and their second game in five matches on tour. Set 377 to win, Matabeleland resumed on 5-0 and were finally bowled out for 261 in the second innings.

ADELAIDE, Australia: Illness and injury have unsettled Pakistan just three days into their Australian tour and coach Mushtaq Mohammad is already considering calling in replacements. Pakistan suffered a new blow Friday when the young Australian Cricket Academy team beat them by 13 runs at Adelaide Oval in their only warm-up match before Sunday's international here against Australia.

Wicketkeeper Moin Khan missed the game with influenza and is in doubt for the international. Team captain Wasim Akram, who was rested with fellow opening bowler Waqar Younis, was also suffering from a cold.

MELBOURNE, Australia: Ian Harvey hit a massive six to clinch a six-wicket victory for Australia over West Indies in a one-day cricket match here Friday. The West Indies made 217 for eight in 50 overs and Australia reached 218 for four in their 45th over.

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka have announced that they are replacing Dave Whatmore with another Australian cricketer, Bruce Yardley, as coach from the new year. The Board of Control for Cricket said it engaged the services of Yardley, 49, to coach the World Cup champions Sri Lanka from January 20 on a two-and-a-half-year contract. Yardley played 33 tests scoring an average of 31.6 runs and taking 126 wickets.



CAIRO, Egypt (Dec. 13): Egyptian al-Zamalek goalkeeper stops a penalty shoot by Nigerian Shooting Stars player Mansha during the penalty shoot-out in their 2nd leg of the African Champions League final. Al-Zamalek won ths title 5-4 in the penalty shoot-out. *(AFP PHOTO)*

German Champions Keep World Crowns

HANOVER, Germany— Germany's Dariusz Michalczewski and Ralf Rocchigiani kept their world titles here Friday.

Unbeaten Michalczewski staged a successful ninth defence of his World Boxing Organization (WBO) light-heavyweight title when the referee stopped his contest against French challenger Christophe Girard in the eighth of a scheuled 12-round bout.

Rocchigiani kept his WBO cruiserweight crown when he unanimously outpointed Swiss opponent Stefan Angehrn over twelve rounds.

It was the second time the 28-year-old Michalczewski, who has now notched up 33 wins since turning professional, had beaten Girard. He scored an unconvincing points win over the Frenchman in a first bout in Cologne in June.

This time, however, he took charge from the first bell and soon had Girard covering up and retreating. *(AFP)*

Wimbledon Avoids Title Talk

LONDON — Wimbledon players just aren't used to being as high as second in the English soccer standings. When asked about the title, they have the same stock answer.

"We reckon Mike Tyson will win it back."

The joke is that no one really believes that Wimbledon is likely to win the English league title. The idea of the team of uncompromising, tough-tackling south Londoners taking on soccer aristocrats such as Juventus, Real Madrid and Ajax in the Champions Cup next season seems laughable.

But Roy Kinnear's team of Battlers are on a roll of 18 games without defeat and aim to trim Arsenal's four-point lead to one Saturday by scoring a home win over Blackburn.

"It's crazy to think about the title and, anyway, we're not the sort of lads that give it big-time chat," said Nigerian international striker Efan Ekoku, who scored twice in last week's 3-1 win at Sunderland.

"But we're the No. 1 Battlers so anyone who can outdo us is going to have to work hard."

Wimbledon's isn't a pretty team to watch although it appears to have at last abandoned its tediously predictable, long-ball style of play.

The whole team plays aggressively and stops their opponents stringing passes together by tackling them almost as soon as they've received the ball.

With tall, muscular players, they are experts at scoring from long throws, free kicks and corners. A typical Wimbledon goal would be a long throw from Vinnie Jones, headed goalward passes by Marcus Gayle and Dean Holdsworth to where Ekoku is well placed to bundle the ball over the line.

Not many Wimbledon strikes make it to goal-of-the-month competitions although Kinnear's team has the third highest total of 29 from 16 games with 17 conceded.

Now the Dons have a home game against a Blackburn team which won the title two seasons ago but now is third from last after winning only two of 16 this term.

At least those two wins, 3-0 against Liverpool and 2-1 over Southampton, have come in the last five games and, last weekend, Rovers gained a 1-1 tie at mid-standings Leicester.

The Wimbledon-Blackburn matchup is one of only three premier league games being staged Saturday. Half the weekend's games have been postponed because players have been called up for World Cup games.

Liverpool, level on points with Wimbledon but third on goal difference, hosts Middlesbrough and Leeds welcomes Tottenham. On Sunday, Chelsea visits Sunderland and Derby hosts Everton on Monday.

Liverpool, currently 2-1 favorite to win the title, hopes to bounce back from a 1-0 loss at home to Sheffield Wednesday last week.

Middlesbrough, which has slipped to fourth from last, may take a gamble on the match fitness of Brazilian midfielder Emerson, who returned to England two days ago after a week-long trip home to see his sick wife. Juninho, its other Brazilian star, likely will be sidelined again because of an ankle injury.

When England defender John Scales runs out at Leeds' Elland Road Saturday he will be loudly jeered by the home fans.

Scales will be wearing a Tottenham shirt having decided at the last minute to join Spurs from Liverpool after all indications were that he was transferring to Leeds.

Tottenham is 10th in the standings, three places above Leeds, but a 3-0 home victory would put George Graham's team above Spurs on goal difference.

Chelsea will be without injured Italian striker Gianluca Vialli at Sunderland. The former Sampdoria and Juventus star pulled a hamstring against Everton in last weekend's 2-2 tie. *(AP)*

Japan on Course to Retain Asian Cup

ABU DHABI —Defending Asian Cup champions Japan will have to give a better performance than they did against China in the group matches when they face Kuwait in the quarterfinals on Sunday if they hope to retain the title.

South Korea made the mistake of underestimating the Kuwaitis and it very nearly cost them a place in the tournament's final stages, two Kuwaiti second-half goals doing the damage.

The defeat left South Korea hoping and praying that their four group points would be enough. It was, but only thanks to a last day win by Japan over China.

The Japanese waited until the 90th minute before they broke the scoreless deadlock.

They also waited until the the final five minutes against Syria before scoring twice to snatch victory. And it is their ability to continue to battle right to the end that should see them succeed over Kuwait.

The Kuwaitis, trying to rediscover their glory years of the 80's when they won the Asian Cup and qualified for the World Cup finals, have tended to fade in the final 15 minutes.

After taking a 2-0 first half lead they collapsed against hosts United Arab Emirates in the group matches to go down 3-2. Claims afterwards of dirty tricks by UAE officials could not change the fact that they had thrown away a comfortable lead.

South Korea, in the other side of the quarterfinal draw, face a tough test against an Iran side that has impressed several European coaches here.

"They are very solid. A very impressive side that could surprise a lot of people," remarked one European coach.

The Saudis were certainly impressed. Iran beat them and won the group.

The South Korean's main threat will come from defender Naeim Sadavi, whose attacks up the right side before crossing, usually to Ali Daei, have already caused plenty of problems for opponents.

South Korea is traditionally a slow starter, picking up the pace as the competition continues, but this time they have looked sluggish and out of form — going backwards instead of foward.

Even their win over no-hopers Indonesia failed to impress.

Coach Park Jong Hwan blames his players tough season in the Korean league.

"They are tired," he repeated after each group match.

Well they have had five days rest since their last match so tiredness should not be a problem against Iran.

Saudi Arabia, who if the form book holds true should meet the Koreans in the semifinal, face China.

The Chinese have been through an emotional roller coaster in the past two days.

Heartbreak when they crashed to Japan in the dying seconds of their final group match. With only three points it looked like they were out of the cup and on their way back to Beijing.

But Uzbekistan, would only needed a draw against Syria to top China and go into the quarterfinals in their first ever Asian Cup, went down 2-1 and suddenly China were back in the championships.

But a trip beyond the quarterfinals seems highly unlikely. The Saudis, two times champions, should be simply too strong and skilfull for them.

The UAE take on Iraq which should be the battle of the round. The UAE stumbled into the quarterfinals while Iraq, like Korea, got through by taking one of the last two avaiable spots.

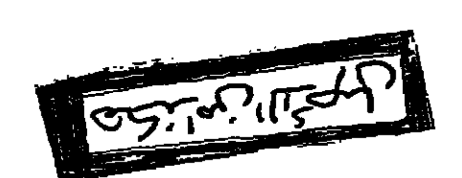
One thing is sure — neither side will be taking any prisoners.

Organizers are privately hoping that UAE and Japan go into the semifinal. Should Iraq and Kuwait both win the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) will face the prospect of having only one semifinal.

Kuwait has made it clear that they will not play against Iraq under any circumstances.

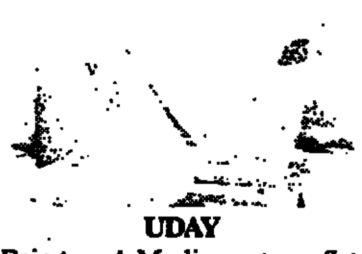
If the worse does happen the Asian Cup, the showcase of Asian football, will be reduced to a farce.

Quarterfinal Draw:
Sunday, Dec. 15
UAE - Iraq (At Abu Dhabi)
Japan - Kuwait (At Al-Ain)
Monday Dec. 16
S. Korea - Iran (At Dubai)
Saudi Arabia - China (At Abu Dhabi) *(AFP)*



Islamic Party Claims Responsibility for Attack on Uday





UDAY

Beirut — A Muslim party on Saturday claimed it was responsible for a failed assassination attempt on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday.

"One of our commandos on Thursday carried out the justice of God and the people against an enemy of God and the people, Uday Saddam al-Takriti, who has sown terror and corruption in Iraq," the Al-Daawa al-Islamiya Party said in a communique in Arabic, a copy of which reached AFP in Beirut.

Uday, 33, was attacked on Thursday evening while he was driving his car in the wealthy Al-Mansur district of central Baghdad.

He was taken to hospital in the Iraqi capital, where his condition was described as not giving any cause for concern.

"Our Mujahadeen surrounded Uday's convoy in the Al-Mansur Souk in Baghdad and opened fire with machine guns, wounding Uday, who was hospitalized and escaped death," the communique dated December 12 added.

The Al-Daawa Party, which was founded in 1958, is the oldest Shia Muslim party in the Iraqi opposition.

The opposition is particularly active in southern Iraq, and the Al-Daawa statement paid tribute to its "martyrs" who died in a fierce uprising against Saddam in the region in the aftermath of the 1991 Persian Gulf war.

The statement said Uday was targetted "to take revenge for the martyrs of Islam and to remind international public opinion of the suffering of our people — victims of Saddam's gang."

The official Iraqi media gave no further information on Saturday about the attack, nor Uday's condition. (AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

TAJIK...

A team of United Nations observers and representatives of both sides were due in the combat zones on Saturday in an attempt to ensure that the cease-fire, signed on Wednesday in Afghanistan, would be respected.

Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov and Said Abdullah Nouri, head of the Islamic opposition, had agreed to the truce until next Thursday, when talks are due to be held on a Tajik peace plan in Moscow.

The failed cease-fire is believed to be a result of a clash between Nouri, head of the opposition's military wing, and Akbar Turandjonzade, leader of its political wing, who opposes the truce, Interfax reported. (AFP)

Egyptian Press Launches Fierce Attack on Netanyahu

CAIRO— The Egyptian press on Saturday launched a fierce attack on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, with one opposition newspaper calling Israelis "pigs and vampires."

"The insolence of Netanyahu reached new heights when he called the Palestinian people animals," said the opposition Al Wafd daily.

It accused the Israeli premier of "pointedly ignoring the massacres of hundreds of Palestinian children by Israelis and the carnage of Cana" in South Lebanon, where more than 100 civilians died in April after Israel shelled a UN compound.

"Do not these Israeli vampires deserve to be treated like pigs?" the paper asked.

Al-Wafd said Netanyahu made the "animal" comments on Wednesday, but there were no reports of such remarks in the Israeli media.

However Netanyahu did react strongly to the drive-by shooting of two Jewish settlers by suspected Palestinians.

The official Egyptian daily Al-Ahram took a more moderate tone, but accused Netanyahu of deliberately ruining relations with Egypt.

"Israel has started a premeditated policy consisting of burning its bridges, its confidence and its communication with Egypt," said the paper in an editorial entitled: "The illusions of Netanyahu."

"The goal of this campaign of lies is clear: It is aimed at pushing the Egyptians to pressure the Palestinians to accept Israeli conditions on Hebron," the paper said.

"Netanyahu is certainly capable of killing off the peace process, but he is incapable of reducing Egypt's role (in the process) or to stop it defending the rights of Palestinians," it added.

A second Al-Ahram editorial warned Israel that it would never achieve its goal of real security or "the respect of any peace accord as long as it thinks it can marginalise Egypt."

And the government Al-Gumhuriya newspaper accused Netanyahu of being an "amateur" who "had launched himself into the peace process with the ideas of a man of war."

Egyptian-Israeli relations have become increasingly tense in recent months, with Israeli leaders repeatedly expressing concern at the virulent attacks on Netanyahu and his hardline policies in the Egyptian press.

The row flared again this week, with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Wednesday angrily insisting that Egypt had to be "the cornerstone of the peace process," and daring Israel to "show us what they can do without Egypt." (AFP)

Philippine Leader Says He's "Better Than Average"

MANILA – Philippine President Fidel Ramos on Saturday denied a report that he was confined for signs of a stroke, saying he felt "better than average."

When asked how he felt, Ramos responded "better than average. But let me tell you my blood pressure is 130 over 75," he told reporters in a brief appearance at the Makati Medical Center where he was confined since Friday.

Speculation abounded on Friday that Ramos had suffered a stroke and a newspaper report on Saturday quoted a source close to the president as saying he had suffered a "transient ischemic attack," or a temporary reduction of blood supply to the brain due to a clot in a blood vessel.

"I know I had the flu. I don't know about the other one (the stroke)," said a slightly pale Ramos, who took time to sign autographs and chat with employees while walking around the hospital.

Ramos' doctor, Faul Fores also denied the report.

"That's not true. He was admitted because he had a fever for two or three days. He was taking self-medication for it and it wasn't working and his joints started to ache," Fores told AFP.

Fores said the fever was traced to a viral infection in the throat. He was advised to rest in the hospital for two days.

Ramos said he would leave the hospital after noon on Sunday. Several appointments scheduled for the weekend and the coming days were cancelled to allow him to rest.

"From now on I'll be my own appointments secretary," Ramos joked.

Jose San Gabriel, another Ramos' doctor said the president was taking cough and cold medication that caused his blood pressure to rise a little, but that all his medical tests yielded positive results. (IRNA)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

HEZBOLLAH...

The pro-Syrian press in Beirut said that in reporting the rocket attack, Israel was preparing an "aggression" against Lebanon aimed at torpedoing an international meeting next week on financing post-war reconstruction projects.

An Israeli military spokesman and a security official in South Lebanon both reported the rockets, which caused no damage or casualties.

Three of the shoulder-held rockets were fired from the outskirts of villages near the southern Lebanese port city of Tyre into northern Israel, the security official said.

"Israeli artillery based in Bayyada, along the border of Israeli-occupied border zone in South Lebanon, fired a dozen shells in the direction of the firings," the official added.

At an emergency meeting held in Kiryat Shmona, the Israeli military command of the northern region decided it was not necessary to call on residents to take to bomb shelters.

Israel launched a massive offensive dubbed "operation Grapes of Wrath" against Hezbollah in Lebanon in April, killing more than 170 people, mostly civilians. (AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

BILDT...

Army chief Ratko Mladic are among those charged by the International Court with crimes, including genocide, committed during the civil war in Bosnia that ended with the dayton accords.

The Bosnian Serbs have refused to hand them over, but the independent Yugoslav news agency Beta said that RS Prime Minister Gojko Klickovic had issued an invitation Friday to the prosecutor of the International Tribunal, Louise Arbour, to visit, if possibly before the end of the year. "We are prepared to have you meet representatives of the RS and to visit some sites that you wish to see," Klickovic was quoted as saying in a letter to Arbour.

Klickovic said a visit by Arbour could help future cooperation between the Rs Snd the International Court, adding that the Serb Republic wanted to develop as "a democratic state under the rule of law." (AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

HEAD...

term was vetoed last month by the United States.

Annan promised to work with member states to restore the troubled organization's financial strength and "political and moral authority" and to promote "motivation and performance at the highest level."

His name will be referred to the 185-member General Assembly for ratification on Tuesday which is but a mere a formality. Annan's five-year term will begin on January 1, 1997.

Kofi Annan, born in 1938, is married and has one son and two daughters. He holds a B.A. (Econ.) and M.Sc.; was educated in the Univ. of Science and Tech., Kumasi, Macalester Coll., St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A., Institut des Hautes Etudes Internationales, Geneva, Switzerland, Massachusetts Inst. of Tech., U.S.A.

Annan has held the following posts: UN ECA, Addis Ababa, UN, New York; WHO, Geneva 1972-74; Chief Civilian Personnel Officer, UNEF, Cairo 1974; managing director, Ghana Tourist Devt. Co. 1974-76; deputy chief of staff services, Office of Personnel Services, Office of UNHCR, Geneva 1976-80; deputy director, Div. of Adm. and Head Personnel Service 1980-1983; director of Adm. Man. Service, director of budget, Office of of Financial Services, UN, New York 1983-86; assistant secretary general, Office of Human Resources Man. 1986-1990; controller, Office of Program Planning, Budget and Finance 1990-, Dept. of Peacekeeping Operations, Feb. 1992-1993; undersecretary-general, Dept. of Peace- keeping Operations Feb. 1993-; Alfred Sloan Fellow, M.I.T. 1971-72. U.S. officials said Friday they expect the U.S.-educated Annan to make a major contribution to restoring the image of the United Nations tarnished after controversial missions in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda.

Koffi Annan, the Ghanaian diplomat poised to become the next UN secretary-general, called on the United States Friday to pay its 1.3 billion-dollar debt to the world body. "I hope to be able to work with the new (U.S.) administration ... to convince them that they should pay their debt," Annan said in an interview with Cable News Network. "By withholding their contribution, they offend friend and foe alike ... you cannot manage an effective organization on a shoestring budget," Annan said in his first remarks since France signalled it would support his candidacy. He spoke as the UN Security Council met for a formal vote certain to result in Annan's election to succeed Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

(Contd from Pg. 1)

LEADER...

Almighty God and said the wisest people are those who model on brave personalities.

Ayatollah Khamenei called on the IRGC personnel to seriously follow the example set by Imam Hussein and said the history of the Islamic Revolution is full of the valuable acts performed by the IRGC personnel thanks to their following the pattern of Imam Hussein.

Prior to Ayatollah Khamenei's speech, the Leader's representative to the IRGC Hojjatoleslam Movahedi-Kermani and IRGC commander Major General Mohsen Rezaei in their lectures felicitated the Leader of the Islamic Revolution on the auspicious occasion, and reaffirmed the IRGC's allegiance to the Leader. (IRNA)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

EU...

out by EU finance ministers on Thursday and finalized by their heads of state and government on Friday.

"We have sent out an important signal to man and markets," German Finance Minister Theo Waigel said of the stability pact agreement that was being seen as a major achievement of the summit.

He hailed the deal as a clear sign that the Euro, whose draft design was simultaneously unveiled at the Central Bank of Ireland here, would be a strong and stable currency.

Under Friday's accord, countries which adopt the Euro and then allow their deficits to rise above three percent of GDP will face stiff fines, equivalent to between 0.2 percent and 0.5 percent of the country's wealth.

Every EU state had accepted the principles of fines as a deterrent against lax fiscal policies which could weaken the new currency.

What they could not agree was the economic circumstances under which countries could be exempt from the fines.

Germany, anxious to reassure its population that the Euro will be as solid a currency as the mark, had held out for as strict a system as its partners would accept. Tight rules were not the result of a "teutonic stability craze," but necessary to ensure the new currency was strong, Waigel said.

In the end, however, Bonn was forced to accept the overwhelming majority view that the system should have a considerable degree of flexibility.

Under Friday's accord, fines will only be waived automatically if a country has suffered an annual economic downturn measured at more than two percent of GDP.

If a country has suffered a recession of between 0.75 percent and 2.0 percent, it will be able to apply for an exemption. Whether it gets one will be for finance ministers from the participating countries to decide.

In normal economic conditions or in a shallow recession, the fines will be automatic, although formally subject to ratification by ministers.

The deal on the stability pact allowed EU leaders to turn their attention to the equally vexing issue of the next steps in the process in European integration.

Prime Minister John Bruton of Ireland, the current EU presidency, presented a draft outline for a revised Maastricht Treaty.

It skirted some of the most controversial issues in the ongoing Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) — the balance of power in EU decision-making between large and small states and the role of national vetoes.

But it included far-reaching proposals to step up cooperation in the fight against organized crime and drug trafficking, to abolish national borders, and to bring immigration, visa and asylum issues under EU control by 2001. (AFP)

Contd from Pg. 1)

MOUSAVIAN...

with Germany. But, he added, the insult of the prosecutor of the Berlin court was unacceptable.

He made it clear that the bitter reaction of the Iranian people was directed against a person and specific department and not against the German government or people.

Elaborating on the background of Tehran-Bonn relations, Mousavian said after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the U.S. put pressure on the European Union to cut off relations with Iran, but Germany was one major country that rejected the call.

"At the end of Iraqi-imposed war, when other countries was hesitant in declaring Iraq as aggressor, Germany took the lead in favor of Iran and offered the highest credit line for Iranian reconstruction programs," he said.

When there was a delay in Iran's repayment to its foreign creditors, Germany also took an initiative and the others followed the suit in encouraging famous insurance bodies to cooperate with Iran to cope with the issue, the Iranian diplomat said.

He said during the meetings of the G7 industrialized nations, U.S. always makes every effort to discourage other countries from cooperating with Iran, but Germany is the sole country opposing U.S. policies.

He said all the factors mentioned above have served to consolidate relations between Tehran and Bonn and there is no reason for Tehran not to give positive response to German goodwill.

Mousavian said Iranian diplomacy has focused on development of friendly relations with Europe and Germany is the strongest in that continent.

However, he said, the volume of trade reduced from eight marks in 1992 to two billion deutsch marks in 1996, something that indicates that although Germany was a vanguard in providing Iran with highest credit lines in those years, Iran did not make most of its purchases from Germany. (IRNA)



WEATHER

The Islamic Republic of Iran Meteorological Organization announced today's weather as follows:

Forecast for Tehran: Max. temp. 12°C, Min. temp. 5°C

Partly cloudy with scattered showers

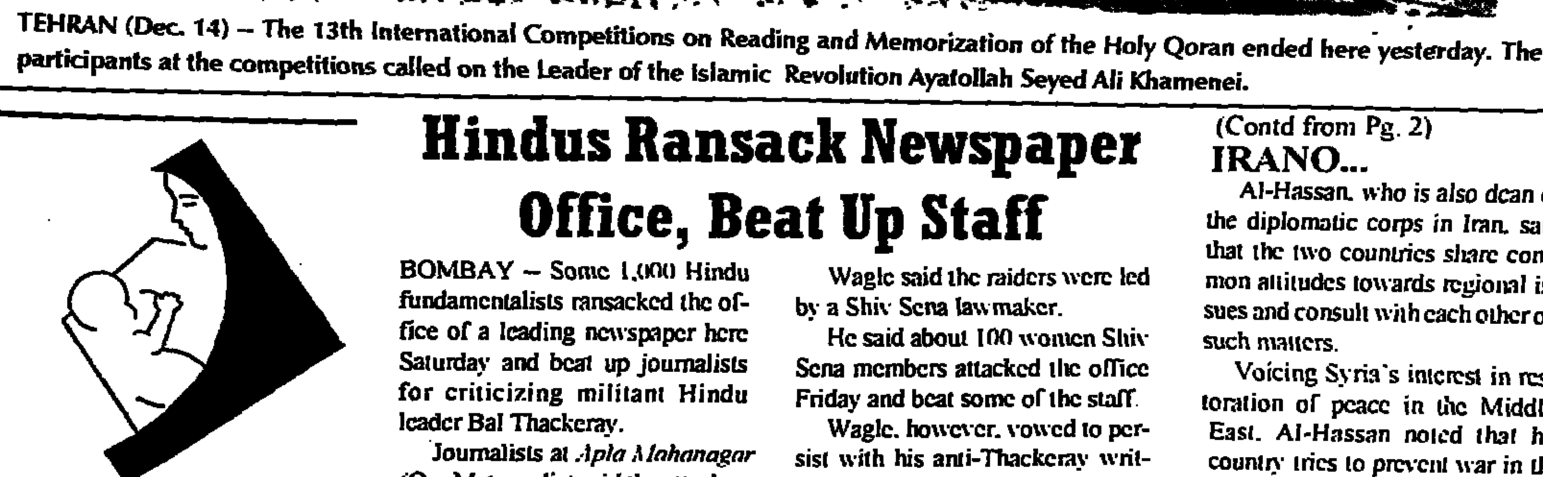
Warmest Point:
Qeshm Port 27°C

Coldest Point:
Firoozkouh -8°C

Some cities of the world

Cities	Max. °C	Cities	Max. °C
Riyadh	28	Vienna	–
Istanbul	12	Moscow	1
Rome	16	Madrid	13
Athens	15	Abu Dhabi	24
London	3	Karachi	–
Paris	3	New Delhi	19
Frankfurt	2	Kuwait	23

Photo: Abbas Kowsari



TEHRAN (Dec. 14) – The 13th International Competitions on Reading and Memorization of the Holy Qoran ended here yesterday. The participants at the competitions called on the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

1st National Consultative Workshop on Breast-Feeding Inaugurated

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The First National Consultative Workshop on Breast-Feeding and Problem-Solving opened here yesterday.

The workshop was held on the occasion of inauguration of the Lactation Management Center in Tehran in collaboration with the Center for Research and Training in Breast-Feeding which is a subsidiery of the WHO.

Feeding the babies exclusively on breast-feeding during the first six months of their birth would improve the mother's and infant's health, Iranian Minister of Health and Medical Training Ali Reza Marandi said in his opening address.

The available statistics indicate that the rate of breast-feeding cases during the first six months in Iran increased from 9.5 percent in 1991 to 41 percent in 1995, Marandi highlighted, adding that the import of 70 million cans of powder milk in 1984 and 1985 have decreased to 11 million cans this year which is expected to meet the needs of the next two years.

The establishment of the Lactation Management Center in Tehran as an affliated organization of WHO shows the close cooperation between the center and WHO during the past five years. Hussein A. Gezairy, Regional Director of the WHO in Eastern Mediterranean Region, remarked.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been the first country in the region to draft a national code for advising the users of breast milk's substitutes, Gezairy stressed.

The establishment of Lactation Management Center is, of course, not surprising in the Islamic Republic of Iran, for Iran had already launched a program for the promotion of breast-feeding as part of an overall effort to prevent child mortality in 1988, Gezayeri noted.

President: IRGC's Vigilance Thwarting Enemies' Plots

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani here Saturday praised the devotion of the personnel of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) stressing that the valuable services rendered by the IRGC in the course of the Islamic Revolution and during the sacred defense are the perfect example of the IRGC's vigilance.

President Rafsanjani made the statement in his address to the commanders and officials of the IRGC's Ansar al-Mahdi personnel who called on the president on the occasion of the IRGC Day.

The president added that through the efforts and vigilance of the intelligence forces of the IRGC the plots and conspiracies of foreign agents who worked to undermine the Islamic Revolution have been thwarted.

He said that the valuable reconstruction has been achieved in light of peace and security prevailing the country which we owe to the unceasing efforts of the armed forces including the intelligence forces of the IRGC. Despite their sensitive profession and relationship with the decision-making centers the intelligence forces of the IRGC are leading a simple life which should be taken as a model by other organizations.

President Rafsanjani stressed the need for strengthening the revolutionary spirit and discipline in the IRGC and its intelligence forces. The commander of the Ansar al-Mahdi thanked the president for his supports of IRGC and reaffirmed the readiness of the IRGC for safeguarding the achievements of the Islamic Revolution.

Egyptian FM: Iran, "a Brotherly Country"

TEHRAN — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa has called Iran a "brotherly" country in the Middle East family of nations, according to the Egyptian daily *Al-Ahram*.

Speaking at the Political Research and Study Center of Cairo University, Moussa was quoted as saying that Iran and Egypt enjoy long historical ties.

According to another Egyptian paper *Akhbar al-Youm*, Moussa termed the existance of good relations between Iran and the Arab countries important, and called on both sides to bring about an atmosphere of understanding.

Egyptian newspapers have also quoted the Egyptian Ambassador to Austria Mostafa al-Faqi as saying that Iran's portrayal as an enemy of the Arab world is an erroneous view, since Iran, in the light of historical and cultural factors, should be viewed as a supplementary force to the Arab world.

He seemed to question the soundness of the policy of confrontation with Iran which is "a big country wielding considerable clout."

He also said that certain powers are poised to adversely affect any attempt of rapprochement between Iran and Egypt, the dailies reported.

(IRNA)

Kenya Sacks Air Traffic Controllers as Strike Creates Chaos

NAIROBI – The Kenyan government sacked the country's air traffic controllers Friday as a week-long strike caused increasing disruption, newspapers reported Saturday.

The Moi International Airport at the Indian Ocean resort city of Mombasa was closed for most of the day, and Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport was closed for about an hour.

James Ayuga, the director of Civil Aviation, meanwhile denied a report by a spokesman for the strikers that a Kenya airways passenger flight and an Austrian Air Lauda plane full of tourists had missed each other by just 15 meters (50 feet) over Mombasa on Tuesday.

(IRNA)

Hindus Ransack Newspaper Office, Beat Up Staff

BOMBAY – Some 1,000 Hindu fundamentalists ransacked the office of a leading newspaper here Saturday and beat up journalists for criticizing militant Hindu leader Bal Thackeray.

Journalists at *Apla Mahanagar* (Our Metropolis) said the attackers belonging to the ruling Shiv Sena Party stormed the daily for the second day in a row.

The raiders ripped out telephone cables, smashed window panes, beat up journalists and non-journalists and tried to set the office on fire, several witnesses said.

"There were some policemen near our office, but they did nothing to protect us," said Nikhil Wagle, the daily's editor. "This is state terrorism and a serious threat to our lives."

The Shiv Sena, headed by Thackeray, rules the western Indian state of Maharashtra, of which Bombay is the capital. The Mahanagar is a vocal critic of Thackeray and his party.

The attackers Saturday were reportedly upset over the publication of allegedly slanderous remarks against Thackeray attributed to anti-corruption crusader Govind Ragho Khairnar.

Wagle said the raiders were led by a Shiv Sena lawmaker.

He said about 100 women Shiv Sena members attacked the office Friday and beat some of the staff.

Wagle, however, vowed to persist with his anti-Thackeray writings.

"Thackeray has been abusing people in foul language for 25 years but nobody has attacked him. If he has freedom of speech, so do others. We shall not be cowed down by this attack," he said.

The Mahanagar and its staff have been attacked many times in the past by Shiv Sena activists.

Thackeray, a self-confessed Hitler fan and a former cartoonist, set up the Shiv Sena about 30 years ago on a rabidly chauvinist and anti-communist agenda.

Rights activists have accused the party of setting off an anti-Muslim pogrom which killed hundreds of people here in 1992-93 after Hindu militants pulled down a 16th-century mosque in northern India.

Thackeray holds no position in the Maharashtra government, but is seen as the "remote control" determining official policies.

(AFP)

India, Iran Share Concern on Afghanistan: Indian Journalist

NEW DELHI – India and Iran are directly affected if political turbulence in Afghanistan continues. Hence, the two countries are not only for the return of peace and order in that country, but have made joint and individual efforts for the same, says M.K. Dhar, a noted journalist of India, expert in Afghanistan affairs.

In his article, 'India-Iran Ties Need Fresh Impetus', published in English newspaper of India *National Herald*, Dhar writes that both Iran and India are concerned about the recent developments in Afghanistan. On Indo-Iran cooperation in the Central Asian region, Dhar says that it augurs well for the development of Central Asia, enhancement of Indo-Iran ties and economic well being of India and Iran.

The recently inaugurated rail link between Iran and Central Asia, which India too was using, had helped transport nearly half a million tons of cargo and its capacity would soon reach eight million tons annually, writes Dhar.

Dhar says that interests of India and Iran in Central Asia are natural, but those of the U.S. are aimed at dominating the newly independent region and denying the countries like Iran a role there.

On the U.S. trade embargo against Iran, Dhar notes that despite the embargo Iran continues to trade with the rest of the world.

Commenting on Iran's role in the region, Dhar opines that Iran still favors the idea of a regional understanding for economic development and preserving security to meet any threat from foreign interference in the region. Such a group should include India, Iran, China, Pakistan and other regional countries.

It is time that Indo-Iran relations receive a furthur impetus. Instability and conflict in the region are a matter of concern to both and they need to pool their talent, resources and experience to meet the challenges facing them, concludes Dhar.

(IRNA)

(Contd from Pg. 2)

IRANO...

Al-Hassan, who is also dean of the diplomatic corps in Iran, said that the two countries share common attitudes towards regional issues and consult with each other on such matters.

Voicing Syria's interest in restoration of peace in the Middle East, Al-Hassan noted that his country tries to prevent war in the region, in spite of stubbornness of the current government of the Zionist regime and its lack of commitment to its obligations made by the previous Zionist government.

The ambassador called on the international community to fulfil its commitments vis-a-vis the measures taken by the Zionist regime to disturb stability in the region.

(IRNA)

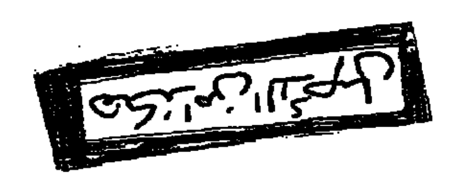
(Contd from Pg. 5)

NON-PERSIAN GULF

mercial was regarded by OPEC in the 1970s as somewhere around $30-40 per barrel. Yet new North Sea and Persian Gulf of Mexico fields are being developed rapidly on assumptions of $15-20 per barrel for the next 20 years. Similarly, the efficiency of gas turbines and combined heat and power plants are displacing oil. In the transport sector, the advent of hybrid vehicles with petrol consumption of less than a fifth of the average present-day automobile points towards yet more structural change for the industry.

What equivalent specters haunt the consumer world? First, the actual interruption of oil and gas supply from the Persian Gulf. Second, a strengthening of ties between the Persian Gulf states and the former Soviet Union to the point tat a north-south axis of cooperation embracing the vast oil and gas reserves of Siberia and the useful resources of the other parts of the CIS and Persian Gulf fuse into a manageable cartel. Third, a nuclear or coal surprise where for safety or environmental reasons, probably triggered by another major accident, current nuclear and coal capacity has to be closed down rapidly in favor of oil and gas. Fourth, an environmental shift against fossil fuels engendered probably by greater understanding of global climate change.

Whatever the speed and detailed form of these development, the Persian Gulf is likely to remain central to global petroleum supply, demand and price.



Three Children Buried Alive in Pit

MANILA -- Three boys were killed and two were injured after a pit accidentally caved in on them at a construction site in northern Philippines, police said Saturday.

The boys, aged nine to 10 were playing in a pit more than a meter (three feet) deep during their snack time in a school campus in Manaoag town on Friday when loose soil from a mound of earth beside the pit fell on top of them, officials said.

It took police 45 minutes to recover the children, they added.

The two survivors, who had suffered suffocation, were taken to a nearby hospital. (AFP)

Daley Collapses at Ceremony, but Later Returns

WASHINGTON -- Bill Daley, President Clinton's nominee for commerce secretary, collapsed Friday during the White House ceremony at which new Cabinet members were named but later returned. "I think he fainted," Clinton said after Daley collapsed. "I think he's fine. We'll give you a report in a minute."

Daley, the brother of Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, was quickly helped to his feet and escorted away. It was not immediately known what caused him to faint.

Daley returned about 10 minutes later to a round of applause. (AP)

Milosevic Softens Stance on Serbian Crisis

BELGRADE -- President Slobodan Milosevic appeared to be offering an olive branch to opposition protestors, but Washington said it was sceptical of his plan to call in a trans-Atlantic security agency to help end Serbia's political unrest.

The invitation to the 54-member Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) also failed to quell the massive street protests, with more demonstrations planned Saturday in Belgrade and other points around Serbia.

One determined group of 150 students marched for 20 hours, arriving in the capital Saturday after setting out from Novi Sad, 80 kilometers (50 miles) farther north. They were welcomed by a crowd of more than 1,000.

After 25 straight days of anti-government marches -- and criticism from abroad, Milosevic invited the OSCE on Friday to come to review the crisis sparked by the cancellation of opposition election victories in 15 of Serbia's 18 biggest cities, including Belgrade. The proposal was contained in a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher made public by Serbia's state-run Tanjug news agency on Friday. (AFP)

Russian Anti-Nuclear Campaigner Nikitin Freed

SAINT PETERSBURG, Russia -- The Russian authorities Saturday released Alexander Nikitin, a Russian ecologist held here since February on suspicion of spying, the head of his defense committee, Boris Pustyntsev, told AFP.

However, Pustyntsev said the release did not mean that the charges against Nikitin had been dropped.

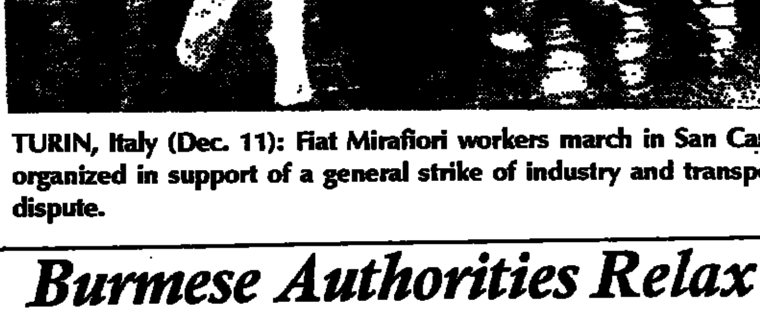
Nikitin, 43, was incarcerated in a Federal Security Service (FSB) prison in Saint Petersburg in February without trial, accused of spying while collecting information on Russian nuclear security in the Arctic north.

The FSB accused him of selling state secrets to Bellona, a Norwegian ecology group, but Bellona insisted that a report it published on Russian nuclear security was based on openly-available information.

Pustyntsev quoted Nikitin's lawyers as saying the charges prepared against their client by the FSB would be handed next week to the court and "the trial will take place." (AFP)



TURIN, Italy (Dec. 11): Fiat Mirafiori workers march in San Carlo Square during a demonstration organized in support of a general strike of industry and transport workers for a contractual labor dispute. (AFP PHOTO)



Three More Killed as Fighting Continues in Mogadishu

MOGADISHU -- Three more people were killed and five wounded Saturday in fighting between clan militias in south Mogadishu, witnesses reported, bringing the death toll since the battles started on Thursday night to at least 21.

Heavy shelling started before dawn, residents said.

Eleven of those killed Friday were civilians, some hit by stray rounds far from the fighting.

The fighting is pitching the militiamen of Musse Sudi Yalahow, who holds the enclave of Medina, and those of Osman Hassan Ali "Atto," who holds another section of south Mogadishu against the militiamen of warlord Hussein Mohamed Aidid.

An Aidid militia commander told AFP that his men had captured an armored personnel carrier from Yalahow's men, the Italian-made vehicle had been captured from government forces in Somalia's civil war which led to the overthrow of dictator Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991, and kept hidden from U.S. and UN troops who arrived here to help famine victims but became embroiled in the clan wars. (AFP)

Major Warns Against Rushing into Euro Use

LONDON -- British Prime Minister John Major on Saturday again voiced serious doubt about the feasibility of deadlines set for launching a single European currency.

Wasting no time after the EU Summit in Dublin cleared another important obstacle on the road to monetary unions, Major warned of the "serious damage" for European states that rush into the single currency system unprepared, in an interview with BBC.

"If it goes wrong because people go in because it is their political will to do so when it is not economically sensible ... then the damage right across Europe will be very serious indeed," Major said.

The prime minister was interviewed in Dublin, where he and fellow European Union leaders had just wrapped up the two-day summit that set their countries firmly on course for monetary union in 1999.

By sealing a deal on a "stability pact" to enforce fiscal discipline among countries that adopt the euro, the 15 EU leaders lifted the last technical obstacle to the single currency project. (AFP)

Burmese Authorities Relax University Security

RANGOON -- Burma's military authorities began relaxing security around the capital's main university Saturday, but left tanks and trucks carrying combat-ready troops deployed in downtown Rangoon.

Although classes remained suspended at Rangoon University, teaching staff and workers were allowed access to their offices for the first time in a week following a wave of student protests across the city. But access roads to other Rangoon campuses remained sealed off, and five tanks remained at government offices in the center of town.

Trucks carrying troops were also conspicuous nearby and next to the medical college where several protests have taken place in the past week. Access to opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's residence on suburban University Avenue, which was blocked a week ago after the outbreak of student

Unrest, also remained sealed off. Aung San Suu Kyi failed to show up for her nephew's wedding at a Buddhist temple on Saturday morning but it was not clear if she had been prevented by authorities from leaving her compound.

Tin Oo, a co-vice chairman in her National League for Democracy (NLD), said Thursday that Aung San Suu Kyi, who had not left her house since last Saturday, refused to accept authorities' restrictions on her movements. (AFP)

Police Find Nerve Gas Cache Big Enough to Kill 15,000

TOKYO -- Acting on a confession from a Doomsday Cult follower, police in Tokyo have recovered a glass bottle containing enough VX nerve gas to kill about 15,000 people, an official said Thursday.

The discovery followed the arrest Dec.3 of Yasuo Hayashi, 38, a member of the Aum Shinri Kyo Doomsday Cult who is suspected of being one of the Aum followers who carried out the Tokyo subway gassing on March 20, 1995.

That attack involved a different nerve gas, sarin, and killed 12 people while leaving thousands sick from the poisonous fumes.

An official of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police said investigators found a 10-centimeter-high (four-inch-high) heat-resistant glass bottle about 20 centimeters (eight inches) underground alongside the bank of a canal in Kodaira, 20 kilometers (12 miles) west of Tokyo. (AP)

Strike Disrupts Life in Karachi

KARACHI -- A partial strike Saturday disrupted life in Pakistan's commercial capital of Karachi as activist groups protested against a member of the Ahmadi sect being made a provincial minister, witnesses said.

Road traffic was thin and major markets were closed after a strike call by an alliance of religious parties including Sunni Tehreek, Jamaat-e-Islami, Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam and Jamiat Ulema Pakistan.

The strike affected attendence at government and private offices and educational institutions as people had problem finding transport.

There was heavy deployment of police and paramilitary troops and patrolling was intensified in parts of the city. (AFP)

Refugees Crossing Into Rwanda

RUSUMO BORDER POST, Rwanda -- Rwandan Hutus in Tanzania began crossing a bridge over the Rusumo River into their own country Saturday after fleeing refugee camps in Tanzania.

The first of an expected mass movement of refugees over the border reached the bridge in mid-afternoon to be met by relief workers with food, water and medical equipment.

A group of about 30 men, women and children, on foot, crossed the river at 3:00 p.m. (1300 GMT). A few others arrived minutes later on a pick-up, then a further group of 10 to 15 on foot. They said Tanzanian troops had accompanied them to the border, but that they wanted to return after fleeing Rwanda's bloody civil war two years ago.

In Nairobi, UN World Food Program (WFP) Spokeswoman Michele Quintaglie said earlier that the Hutus in the Ngara camps some 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the border had started moving out about 2:30 p.m. (1130 GMT).

"We don't know how many there are, but it's definitely a mass movement," she said. (AP)

Supreme Court Defers Hearing on Bhutto's Dismissal Appeal

ISLAMABAD -- Pakistan's top court on Saturday deferred hearing former Premier Benazir Bhutto's legal challenge to her dismissal last month by President Farooq Ahmed Leghari.

A seven-judge bench of the Supreme Court decided first to hear other constitutional writs challenging validity of presidential powers to dissolve the National Assembly.

"We bow before the decision of the court," said Bhutto's main counsel, Aitzaz Ahsan, a former interior minister.

Leghari, who sacked Bhutto and simultaneously disbanded the assembly on November 5, did so by invoking the constitution's Article 58-2(B), which has been used three times before by presidents.

Chief Justice Sajjad Ali, who is heading the panel of judges, said the court first wanted to address the controversy surrounding the provision on presidential powers. (AFP)

DUBLIN, Ireland (Dec. 13): German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (L) gesticulates as he chats with French President Jacques Chirac during the traditional group photo session during the summit of European Union heads of state and government at Dublin. (AFP PHOTO)



TEHRAN TIMES

All Countries Are Developing Countries

Contrary to an ideological rhetoric that declares certain parts of the world to be 'developed', all countries are developing countries. The categorization of the nations of the world as 'developing' or 'less developed' or 'newly developed' should not delude us into believing that the countries of the G-7 represent some static condition of high civilization, from which no lapse is possible.

The direction in which Britain and the other advantaged places of the world are developing is becoming clearer each day. Those who deplore the fact that Britain has now slumped to 18th place in the global prosperity league are unlikely to be able to prevent further slide, as the tiger or miracle economies of South-East Asia, unencumbered by burdens of social responsibility, continue to make their way in the world.

Whatever the further for Britain, the outlook for the poor is dismal. If economic growth resumes, the gulf between rich and poor will continue to widen, as has happened over the past 20 years, and as indeed has also occurred in the successful Asian economies. (In fact, inequalities in Britain in the 1990s are similar to those which existed in the 1890s.) If we fail to keep pace with the more dynamic economies, and sink lower in the league-tables of wealth, it is not the rich who will give up their privileges. This suggests that whatever happens, increasing inequality is unlikely to be much abated.

But these are speculations best left to economists. For there are other interesting features of our developing country which ought to make us wonder about its direction. For have we not learned in the past 10 years that we most now live with a 'gun culture' in Britain, where there are at least one million handguns in circulation? Have we not been obliged to adapt to the existence of a number of 'drug cultures', where up to half of 15-year-olds have had experience of mind-altering substances?

Do we not also find ourselves the bewildered onlookers of new forms of gang warfare, of organized crime and a higher incidence of random violence against the person? We have become accustomed to accepting growing number of assaults upon the elderly. (Is this reflection of our aging population, and the intolerance of the young who are merely expressing in advance their unwillingness to take on further burdens of care?) Has not our prison population reached an historic high, with plans for a new wave of correctional facilities to contain the unruly private-enterprise dissenters produced by this best of all possible worlds?

These intractable by-products of development are not going to be addressed by any conceivable change of policy which any future government may contemplate.

If, in the presence of these things, there is now a certain nostalgia for an older form of Conservatism - the old sense of responsibility which the rich may perhaps have felt for their less fortunate fellows - it would be foolish to imagine that this more tender sensibility is merely in abeyance, waiting to be revived at a more convenient electoral moment. It is far more likely that this has vanished for ever, in the same way that labor's sometime radicalism is now defunct, and may now be seen as simply a stormy adolescent passage in the coming to maturity of a political party.

It is sentimental fiction to believe that politics is all a matter of swings of the pendulum. Those who have nourished the delusion of the inherent moderation, tolerance and absence of extremes in British political and social life may have another think coming.

For the economic and social processes over which politicians preside (in the same way that figure-heads usually preside over nations, for ceremonial rather than functional purposes), are becoming less amenable to national control, less responsive to the actions of government, less biddable, it seems, by human beings.

The categorization of the nations of the world as 'developing', 'less developed' or 'newly developed' should not delude us into believing that the countries of the G-7 represent some static condition of high civilization, from which no lapse is possible.

For if governments really had the kind of power they like to claim for themselves, how could they possibly have acquiesced in the levels of violence, social disintegration, community breakdown, disruption of kinship and growth of crime that we have seen?

One of the more obvious effected of globalization is detectable slipping away of power from the hands of local (i.e. national) politicians. Naturally, those who believe staunchly in the release of global market forces will make a virtue of this. Political movements which came into existence to modify the baleful effects of unfettered economic forces may exhibit a vestigial reluctance to go along with everything that comes in the wake of free markets. But they no longer question the need for economic growth and expansion in perpetuity, even through this desirable goal may bring about, not merely some distasteful consequences (there have been plenty of these already), but may also require fresh severties and punitive visitations, such as we have scarcely yet imagined.

All the public rhetoric by now sounds reassuring and unthreatening - the need to become competitive to equip our people with the 'training' required for the 21st century, the importance of not being left behind in the global rat-race. But it may be that, in a world where there is no will and less power to impede the working out of economic forces, far greater levels of disamenity, turmoil and violence may become unavoidable.

Those who saw the coming of the Thatcherites as an historical and reversible aberration were perhaps wrong. They may have been only the relatively being harbingers of things to come. Certainly, at the time, they were regarded as the suitable flint-hearted incumbents which the times demanded. They were indispensable to the restructuring of Britain's economy , its integration into the global market, even though at the cost of considerable social and psychic disintegration. Theirs was the business of emancipating the hobbled wealth-creators from the constraints imposed by the modest provision of welfare, of dismantling the disincentives to labor, which had feather-bedded a population grown idle on the easy life of state hand-outs.

As they went about their work, this did indeed bring about some cruel injustices for which there was, of course, no shortage of apologists, many of them among the most able and clever of their generation, as can always be found when it becomes necessary to moralize what is amoral, and to represent injuries upon the most vulnerable as high principle. They were only too ready to discern the hand of providence in the marginalizations and exclusions of the poor, to see the best of all possible worlds in evictions which sent the most wretched to make their accommodation with life on the streets of the cities. Thatcher herself, in a prophetic new year message early in her first term, explicitly stated that we could expect to see Britain become 'a more abrasive, less cosy place'. She was not kidding.

But the path on which we are now embarked is not going to become less rocky. Even opposition politicians no longer talk of turning back the clock, of reversing the 'reforms', but are committed to facing whatever adventures may befall us as we proceed on our now predetermined development journey.

The future rigorous of that expedition may cause us one day to look back upon the Thatcher years (and on their minor Major coda) as a time of high humanity, temperance and clemency.

For in a world where money power reigns, and takes precedence over all other influences, mere political power all too readily passes from the hands of nominal elected leaders, and into the less scrupulous clutches of drug-lords, arms barons, media moguls, property czars, the king-makers of industrial empires: a new global aristocracy of banditry and brute force has already come into being, and the very words used to designate them suggest tyrannical historical hierarchies. It suggests an emerging techno-feudalism, which mimics and replicates what used to be regarded as long defunct and archaic power-structures.

Poor Maggie, poor John Major, maybe poor Tony blair - perhaps some of the last local eaders, pitiable in their mild powers and attenuated sovereignties, trying to reclaim for the nation state powers concentrated in a more mighty imperium than the world has yet seen. Those in Britain who have been obsessed with the bureaucracy of Brussels, the faceless imposers of social chapters and pettifogging restrictions, are speaking in metaphors: these are as nothing compared to the dark, predatory and ruthless necessities of a global capitalism, to which all alternatives have been, to universal acclaim, declared both superfluous and impossible.

I was struck by the truth of this a coupe of years ago in Brazil. In one of the most lawless favelas (slums) on the edge of Rio de Janeiro, where the gun, the mafia and the drug-lords are the undisputed rulers, one activist remarked that Marx had predicted socialism or barbarism. He observed that here, in large parts of his heavily urban and debt-burdened country, that question no longer belonged to the future, for the choice (if choice it ever was) had long been made. The people were living in barbarism in the daily here and now.

How else to describe the dumping of murdered street-children on garbage heaps, the cutting of the throats of strangers for the money for a fix, the territorial gun-battles over some of the most desolate landscapes on earth? The same activist added that all this is well-known, but that it does not matter, because the rich have withdrawn to their gilded retreats behind guarded frontiers, and have abandoned the poor to fight over such resources as remain after privilege has taken its pickings.

Can anyone looking at Europe in the late 1990s, scarred and scared by insecurity, racism, crime and inequality, be sure that 'it could not happen here?' How often in the past 30 years have we not observed the USA, and marveled at such excesses as drive-by shootings, child pornography, snuff movies, gang warfare, infant heroin addicts, serial killings, teenagers murdering each other for the sake of prestigious fashion logos, and reassured ourselves that such things do not occur in safe, old-fashioned, tolerants Britain? If we have stopped saying that now, this is because we now know that whatever horrors are uncovered in the USA today, will unfailingly appear here tomorrow.

Let us then make the best of these dying years of the late century. For who knows what aspirates may attend the future of the sole system left in contention in the world? For these may make even the troubled and insecure times we are now living through come to appear as a moment of peace and lenity, and bathe the Thatcher years in the softest afterglow of regretted and irrecoverable nostalgias.

(Courtesy Third World network Features)

Non-Persian Gulf Petroleum Investment an Enormous Waste of Capital

There is a fundamental paradox - both economic and political - in the exploration and production of oil in the late 20th century. The problem lies essentially in the Middle East, but also in the minds of the major players in the industry and in public opinion worldwide.

Any treatise on mineral extraction will instruct an investor to go first to the resource of lowest cost. This would, in theory, point the oil and natural gas industries towards the Persian Gulf, which commands 62.5% of total proven global oil reserves and which can still produce much of those reserves (whatever particular Persian Gulf companies and governments might claim) very cheaply indeed.

Yet the fear of an interruption of supply, as seen in the price and supply discontinuities of 1973-4 and 1979-80, still haunts the industry and the public mind. Today, therefore, some three-quarters of total world-wide oil and gas investment is spent in the high-cost Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries which have barely 6% of global reserves and little hope of increasing this share. Even worse, OECD currently accounts for about 25% of world oil production so what little reserves they have are being depleted much faster than elsewhere. If only a part of current OECD investment could be switched safely to the Middle East, the barrels produced per unit of capital could be greatly enhanced.

The world would then begin to see much non-Persian Gulf petroleum investment as a historical aberration and an economic waste of capital of massive proportions. Yet fears of excessive dependence on the Persian Gulf persist. A consequence of the continuation of heavy OECD investment in non-Persian Gulf (and non-OPEC) high-cost supply is that OPEC and the Persian Gulf will steadily increase their competitive reserves position and there is no plausible scenario over the next 5-20 years which can challenge that assumption of increasing strength.

In the shorter term, the position is not at all so clear. A changing trading pattern and post-Cold War shifts in political alignments confuse matters. Meanwhile, the petroleum industry worldwide is relaxed (perhaps far too relaxed) about the current prospects for energy prices and reassured by the effectiveness of U.S. and allied intervention in the Persian Gulf both against Iran in 1986-8 and against Iraq in 1991. In terms of oil prices the consensus view is more fearful of abrupt falls than hopeful of upward drift.

Fears of excessive dependence on the Persian Gulf states for oil supply and an interruption of that supply have resulted in a large percentage of the world oil and gas investment being spent in the high-cost OECD countries with barely 6% of global reserves. If only a part of current OECD investment could be switched safely to the Middle East, the barrels produced per unit of capital could be greatly enhanced.

How can the industry be so sure?

First, in terms of total global energy balances, the share of oil in the energy mix continues to erode slowly with nuclear, gas and coal taking up much of incremental global energy demand. So the load placed on oil is not so great - less than a 2% rise per annum in global demand in 1994-5 and a consensus that this might be a reasonable forecast for oil growth over the next two decades, which might well be accomodated at roughly the present price level. However, in 1994 a rise in global oil demand of 1.7% masked very strong and rising growth in Asia (over 6%) and a sharp fall in the CIS states (by 15%). If oil demand in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) begins to bottom out in the way that we have recently seen in Eastern European and China and the Asian tigers fulfil their own expectations of accelerating economic growth, there might be quite a market surprise - an unexpected leap in global demand.

Can global oil supply meet such a surge in demand? The answer is only with considerable strain. Certainly Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Urited Arab Emirates are already insetting heavily in new production capacity. Iraqi production capacity remains a safety valve and the market has more or less accepted that up to 700,000 barrels per day of UN-permitted exports could absorb much of the incremental demand in 1996. Of course a sudden return of full-scale Iraqi exports would be bound to force prices down.

There are other reasons behind current industry complacency. In the 1990s there are very many more exporters, many more players in the market, than in the 1970s. Such diversity lends resilience and strength when supply and demand imbalances emerge. The old isolation of the east of Suez/Pacific market with its $1 per barrel premium on Persian Gulf crudes going West has vanished. Environmental constraints in Japan and its neighbors have created such a demand for sweet light crudes that some West African light crude exports have switched to the Pacific market and Norwegian cargoes have recently gone to Taiwan. In summary, the market is much bigger and more flexible than it was. It is a genuine world market.

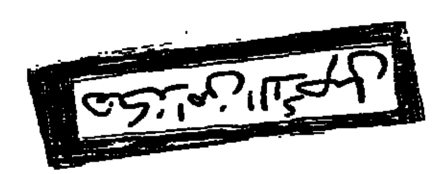
None the less, if important demand growth from the Asia-Pacific region continues at even 6% (and it averaging more than double that in such areas as South Korea and South China), all eyes will be on the Persian Gulf producers again, as the only production areas with spare capacity and the potential to create new capacity relatively quickly.

Any tightening of the market will help Persian Gulf producers to finance such an expansion by swelling heir reserves. This would bring them very rapidly to the dilemma of the past - why go on expanding production further at great cost and energy when the higher prices of a tightening market will deliver substantial increases in revenue in any case?

Specters for producers and consumers

Another specter haunts all the Persian Gulf producers: advanced technology. The industry has surprised them (any many others) by cutting quite dramatically its exploration, development and production cost in high-cost non-OPEC areas. The price threshold for long-standing non-OPEC production to be fully com-

(Contd on Pg. 15)



Prince Charles Sacks Governors of His Institute

LONDON — Prince Charles has sacked the entire council of his Institute of Architecture, which he formed five year ago, in a bid to end internal feuding, AFP quoted a press report recently.

The 14 members of the council were asked to resign at a meeting at Saint James's Palace because the prince felt the institute needed to take a new direction, according to the *Times*.

It was set up to promote Charles's views on architecture -- which are seen by critics as extremely conservative -- but earlier this year was refused academic approval and given two years to improve its academic standards.

This means that students who complete the two-year course it offers are unable to practice architecture in Europe because there is no recognition from the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architects' Registration Council of the United Kingdom.

The institute has a new director, Professor Richard Hodges, who is seen as keen to end the feuding and personality conflicts which have beset it over the last three years.

The *Times* reported that the meeting was entirely amicable and that the council had agreed unanimously to stand down to make way for a smaller group which will determine the future direction of the institute.

Meanwhile, according to an AP report from London, in a gesture of solidarity with another former royal highness, Princess Diana's Christmas card bears a picture of her two sons posing with the daughters of the Duchess of York.



The picture graced the front pages of the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* on Thursday.

Diana lost the "Her Royal Highness" honor when Prince Charles divorced her in August, and Fergie was likewise demoted when Prince Andrew cut her loose in April.

The kids, however, are all highnesses still, and Diana's sons William and Harry are right behind their father in the line of succession to the throne.

The message inside the card is unchanged from previous years: "Wishing you a very happy Christmas and New Year".

The picture looks like anyone's vacation snapshot, but newspaper read deeper meanings.

"Observers said Di was making the point that the children are the future of the royal family, no matter how their mums are treated by palace 'enemies'," said the *Sun*.

"Reveals the growing bond between her and Fergie," said the *Daily Mirror*.

"The message in Princess Diana's Christmas card is clear: times are changing in the royal family," said *Daily Mail* reporter Richard Kay, one of Diana's confidantes. (Dispatches)

Police Discover Human Bones After Mafia Tip-Off

PALERMO, Italy — Human bones were found near an underground bunker where an 11-year-old boy was murdered by the Mafia, police said after acting on information from Mafia turncoats.

The discovery of the bones, which police said came from several different bodies, was made as Mafia chief Giovanni Brusca was jailed for a further 21 years by a court here for gun-running and drug-dealing.

Brusca, 36, originally told police of the bunker where Giuseppe di Matteo, 11, son of Mafia turncoat Santino di Matteo, was held before being strangled and his body put in an acid bath.

Brusca, who was arrested in May, succeeded Toto Riina as head of the Sicilian Mafia on the latter's arrest in January 1993 and his name has been linked to all significant actions by the organization in recent years.

Before his sentencing Friday he had already been condemned to life imprisonment for the murder of an influential businessman and member of the Mafia. (AFP)

10,500 Dresses Among Indian Politician's Treasure Trove

MADRAS — Police probing a jailed actress-turned-politician for corruption discovered 10,500 sarees, 750 pairs of shoes and jewelry worth around $14.5 million in her houses, a police report said recently.

The list of items found at the homes of Jayalalitha Jayaram, former chief minister of the southern state of Tamil Nadu State, was read out to a court in this provincial capital.

Voted out in state elections earlier this year, Jayalalitha stands accused of siphoning off $2.4 millions following a deal to purchase more than 45,000 television sets for villages in the state in July 1995.

The report said: "Documents relating to purchase of property to the tune of $8 million have also been recovered and the process for assessing the present market value is on."

Jayalalitha, dubbed by critics as India's Imelda Marcos because of her lavish lifestyle, has denied the charges.

The Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption said a five-day search at the politician's Mansion in madras and her farm house in Hyderabad city had just ended.

The items discovered included gold, diamonds and jewelry weighing around 28 kilograms (61.6 pounds) worth about $1 million and silver articles weighing 800 kilograms (1,760 pounds) worth $114,000.

There were also 700 bangles, 10,500 sarees — 750 of which were made from pure silk — 750 pairs of shoes valued at $6,400, 91 watches, 19 cars, 44 air conditioners and furniture worth $142,857.

The court heard that her 50-roomed house in the Poes Gardens District of Madras was decorated with expensive Italian marble and housed a mini-cinema.

Jayalalitha Jayaram was arrested on November 7 and refused bail by the Madras High Court on Thursday. The Madras High Court on Friday also dismissed a submission by Jayalalitha questioning the raids.

Her detention led to riots by her supporters. One man burnt himself to death following her arrest.

Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda said earlier this week he was "shocked and surprised" by the hoard.

Several politicians have said Jayalalitha is the subject of a "political vendetta" and have accused judges of hounding politicians. During her years in office she took a token salary of one rupee (.02 cents) a month. (AFP)

Prison Escape King Gets Eight More Years

VERSAILLES, France — Michel Vaujour, 45, author of a dramatic escape from a Paris prison aboard a helicopter piloted by his wife in 1986, was given eight more years in jail here late Friday for two similar attempts.

The Assize court here sentenced Vaujour's current girlfriend, Jamila Hamidi, 27, and a former cell-mate, Erick Grebeauval, 30, to seven years each for their part in the two escape bids in 1993, while Grebeauval's fiancee, Stephanie Lorenzini, 25, got three years, of which 22 months were suspended.

The two attempts, in June and August 1993, followed similar patterns, with the seizure of five hostages, among them helicopter pilots, with the aim of flying to the prison where Vaujour was being held.

The first time the alarm was given and the jail exercise yard was cleared, while on the second occasion the helicopter pilot managed to escape.

In May 1986 Vaujour's wife Nadine, who had taken flying lessons, piloted a helicopter over the roofs of Paris to lift her husband out of the capital's Sante Prison.

Four months later he was recaptured after being wounded in the head in a shoot-out with police as he tried to rob a bank. (AFP)

Rare Condors Soar Again in U.S. Southwest

WASHINGTON — Six California condors — creatures on the brink of extinction a decade ago — were set free over northern Arizona's rugged canyons, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has said.

The two males and four females, ranging in age from six to seven months, soared off the Paria Plateau some 200 kilometers (124 miles) north of Flagstaff, Arizona.

Bred in captivity, they received special training to avoid the greatest threats to their survival — power lines and human contact.

Only 120 condors remain in the world including 30 in freedom or semi-freedom across Arizona and California.

Common throughout North America in prehistoric times, these vultures were on the brink of extinction in the 1980s when scientists captured seven of them in an 11th-hour bid to ensure their reproduction. (AFP)

Judge Rules State May Regulate Gambling on Internet

CHICAGO — A Minnesota judge has ruled that state authorities can regulate gambling on the Internet in a decision that could have a major impact on the development of online gambling.

Thursday's ruling by State District Judge John Connolly is certain to add to the continuing debate about the application of local, state, federal or even international laws to cyberspace business operations that transcend traditional boundaries, the St. Paul Pioneer Press reported Friday.

In a lawsuit filed in July 1995, the state of Minnesota sought to block a Las Vegas corporation, Granite Gate Resorts, from offering sports bookmaking services to state residents on the Internet that allow people to place bets by credit cards.

The Las Vegas firm argued that the state had no jurisdiction and that the corporation had not mailed anything or advertised in Minnesota.

Betting on sporting events is illegal in Minnesota.

The *St. Paul*, Minnesota paper quoted Minnesota Attorney General Hubert Humphrey as saying that the pre-trial ruling by Connolly speaks to the larger issue of whether states can address alleged criminal activities on the Internet.

A date for the trial has not yet been set. (AFP)

Chrysler to Idle Illinois Plant for One Week

CHICAGO -- Chrysler, the number three U.S. carmaker, has said it would idle more than 3,600 workers at a plant in northern Illinois because of sluggish sales of its small cars and other internal factors.

"We are down next week," a plant official in Belvidere said but refused to go into details.

In Detroit, Michigan, Chrysler Spokesman Dan Moore said the assembly plant's 3,653 workers would be idled from Monday for one week ahead of their Christmas vacation from December 21 to January 2.

Moore said sluggish sales of Dodge and Plymouth neons were one of the factors for the shutdown but also pointed to other internal factors at the plant, without elaborating.

Industry analysts said dealers currently had a 95-day supply of neons. A 60-day supply of cars is viewed as healthy.

All three leading U.S. carmakers have been reporting slumping sales of their small cars. (AFP)

"Wasted Week" of Greenhouse Talks as Countries Fail to Agree

GENEVA — Delegates from 150 countries cut short negotiations in Geneva after failing to agree on measures to reduce emissions of "greenhouse" gases, delegates here said recently.

Four days of talks came to an end Thursday, a day ahead of schedule, without any clear progress on setting fixed limits for air pollution.

The delegates had gathered to thrash out terms for a "legally binding" protocol, envisaged by environment ministers in July to force states to comply with the convention on climatic change adopted in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

The protocol is to serve as a basis for an international treaty to be discussed in December next year in Kyoto, Japan.

However, the failure to find common ground in Geneva has raised concern that the next round of talks in Kyoto will now be doomed.

"Japan is headed for failure in a year's time if the current lack of progress in the international negotiations continues," said the environmental organization Greenpeace.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) said the talks had been "a wasted week."

Environmental organizations accused the United States and the European Union of going back on the undertakings made by ministers in July.

"The U.S. has obstructed progress all the way through this meeting," said Bill Hare, head of the Greenpeace delegation.

The United States is accused of caving in to the industrial lobby, and of refusing to impose any restrictions before 2010.

"Few delegations had come prepared to enter into detailed discussions, though it is clear that there is an enormous amount of work to be done before the Kyoto summit in December (1997). This meant the U.S. effectively dominated the debates," said Meryyln McKenzie Hedger of the WFN.

Hopes for some measure of agreement were made more remote by the absence of a united position within the European Union, with France singled out for having put forward its own separate proposals.

"What clearly gives rise to concern is how far apart countries are still sometimes on very fundamental points," said Michael Zammit Cutajar, executive secretary of the 1992 convention.

The only point of agreement was that the chairman of the negotiations, Raul Estrada, will present a text bringing together all the diverging positions in order to accelerate the process at the next session in March in Bonn.

"We have now crossed the threshold from the analysis phase to the negotiating phase," Estrada said. (AFP)

China Puts Cops on Bikes

BEIJING — China is putting its police on the beat on souped up bicycles for the first time.

The innovation has started in Shijiazhuang, capital of the northern Province of Hebei, where police ride black and white bikes equipped with a siren and headlights, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Although bicycles fill China's streets and are the most common means of transport, the first bike-mounted police patrols only started on December 1.

China used to rely on neighborhood committees to report crimes and any strangers who came to the area, but its rapidly modernizing society and new freedoms of movement prompted Beijing to start police patrols in May 1995.

"Since our budget is limited, we cannot afford a car for every patrolman, but equipping them with bicycles is a low-cost solution that also allows them to go down narrow lanes," the news agency quoted a senior Hebei police officer as saying.

Since April, the Ministry of Public Security has been waging a "strike hard" campaign against rising crime, but Vice Minister Bai Jingfu has conceded that serious crime still rose in the first 10 months of the year. (AFP)

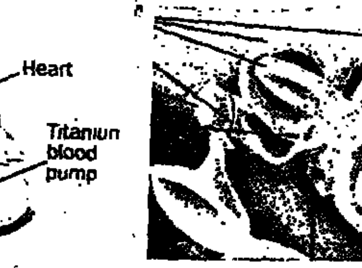
Colombia Locks Up Cali Chief

CALI, COLOMBIA — A judge has locked up the Cali drug cartel's chief for 11 years, in what is the country's stiffest sentence to date against a narcotics baron.

The judge, wearing a mask to conceal his identity, sentenced Juan Carlos Ramirez to 24 years, but lopped 13 years off the sentence for his cooperation with authorities, court sources said.

Ramirez was arrested this year after authorities identified him as the successor to the jailed leaders of the cartel, brothers Gilberto and Miguel Rodriguez. (AFP)



For Your Heart's Sake



High blood pressure is one of Iran's most common diseases. Affecting a great number of adults, high blood pressure (or hypertension) claims countless lives a year. While the dangers associated with it are great, hypertension is a controllable disease. Here is what you should know about high blood pressure:

What Is High Blood Pressure?

Every time your heart beats, it pumps blood into your arteries, creating pressure in them. This pressure forces blood through your circulatory system to every part of your body.

For some, blood pressure is nearly always higher than it should be. While doctors do not know what causes this condition, they do know that hypertension, left unchecked, can lead to serious health problems.

How Can High Blood Pressure Hurt You?

High blood pressure increases the workload placed on your heart and arteries. A heart straining to pump blood can become enlarged, increasing the likelihood of heart failure. Arteries forced to carry blood under greater pressure may become scarred, less elastic, and *athero-sclerotic* (hardened); clots can form or lodge in hardened blood vessel, causing heart attack or stroke.

Do I Have High Blood Pressure

There is only one way to tell if you suffer from hypertension — visit your doctor or a local screening program for a blood pressure test. It is especially important for you to be tested if you are a member of a group most likely to suffer from the disease: persons over the age of 35, African-Americans, and people who are over-weight.

You are also at greater risk if high blood pressure runs in your family. If you *do* have high blood pressure, take immediate steps to treat it.

How Can I Control High Blood Pressure?

Watch your diet: avoid fatty foods, eat less salt, and, if you need to, lose weight. Be physically active. Do not drink alcohole, but if you must, do so in moderation. If lifestyle modifications do not work, your doctor can prescribe medication.

Moreover, see a doctor regularley. If you have high blood pressure, alert your doctor to other medications you plan on taking. Some may unfavorably affect your high blood pressure, such as nasal decongestants or cough/cold and wieght-control medicines with *phenyl-propanol-amine* (PPA). With a doctor's help, you can keep your blood pressure under control, significantly lowering your risk of heart failure or heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease.

In some villages in mountaeous region in countries like Tibet, Central Asian republics and Chile you will find people whose average age is between 120 and 145. Researchers try to discover their secret of long life. They try to find out why people in those regions do not suffer from high blood pressure and heart attack.

Obviously, you will find it difficult or impossible to adopt their lifestyle, but, it would be wise to try your best to choose, as much as possible, their diet and follow their habits.

You Can Guard Against Cancer -- Here's How

Experts say up to two-thirds of cancers wouldn't occur if all the advice about preventing cancer was applied. True, some cancer risk is inherited. But fact is, there's still much you can do to boost your natural defenses and reduce your cancer risk. The answers are all around you:

1 What you eat. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes (such as beans) contain some of nature's secret weapons against cancer. Examples: Antioxidants (vitamins C, E and beta-carotene). phytochemicals (organic substances you can't get in most vitamin supplements), fiber, and the B vitamin folic acid and B6.

Best choices:Onion, garlic, asparagus, cabbage, broccli, spinach, carrots, tomatoes, red peppers, sweet potatoes, oranges, grapefruit, beans and whole grain cereals.

2 What you don't eat. Salt-cured, smoked or nitratecured foods like ham, smoked salmon and sausage have been linked with cancers of the esophagus and stomach. So limit their consumption. Plus: Cut down on your total fat intake. It may reduce risk of breast, colon and prostate cancers.

3 What you do. Individuals 40% or more overweight have an increased risk of colon, breast, prostate, gallbladder, ovary and uterus cancers. So maintain a healthy weight by combining a varied diet with regular physical activity.

4 What you drink. If you do drink, limiting alcohol consumption may reduce your risk of mouth, throat and liver cancer, among other types. The good news: Drinking teas (green or black) may help guard against certain cancers.

5 What you inhale. Smoking causes 30% of all deaths from cancer, so try to quit smoking if you do smoke. Warning: Even chewing or sniffing tobacco increases risk of certain cancers.

6 Where you go. It's estimated that most of the more than 800,000 cases of skin cancer each year are sun-related. So avoid sun overexposure, and use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPE) of 15 or higher when in direct sunlight, and wear UV sunglasses.

7 What you take. Research suggests that long-term use of aspirin can cut risk of colorectal (large bowel) cancer. Problem: Aspirin's possible side effects. So don't take it on your own. If you're at risk for colorectal cancer, discuss this option with your doctor.

THOUGHT

One of the Imams is reported to have said: It was said to Jesus the son of Mary (P): How did you begin the morning, O Spirit of Allah" He said: I began the morning with my Lord, the Blessed and Supreme, above me and the fire (of hell) before me and death in pursuit of me. I have not obtained that for which I wished and I cannot keep away the things I hate. So who of the poor is more poor than I?

Bahar, Vol. 14, P. 322)

PRAYER

Noon..........................12:00
Evening.......................17:15
Dawn (tomorrow)........... 05:29
Sunrise (tomorrow)..........07:08

TODAY IN HISTORY

1800 — Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia sign second armed neutrality, of the North to counter British right of search.

1970 — Soviet spacecraft starts sending messages from planet Venus.

1986 — Rival ethnic groups battle in Karachi and set hundreds of homes and shops ablaze in city's worst rioting since Pakistani independence 41 years ago.

1988 — UN General Assembly calls overwhelmingly for convening of International Middle East peace conference.

1989 — Panamanian national assembly of representatives names Gen. Noriega head of government and ceases ties with the United States.

Doctors Find New Muscular Dystrophy Approach

LONDON — British researchers said recently they may have found a new approach to treating duchenne muscular dystrophy using a protein that could help the body overcome the deficiency that causes the disease.

The new approach was tested on mice, but the researchers hope their findings could translate to humans.

Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a severe form of muscular dystrophy that kills sufferers in their late teens or early 20s, affects about one in every 5,000 male babies.

The incurable disease is caused by a genetically inherited protein deficiency. But treating victims with the protein, dystrophin, has not worked very well.

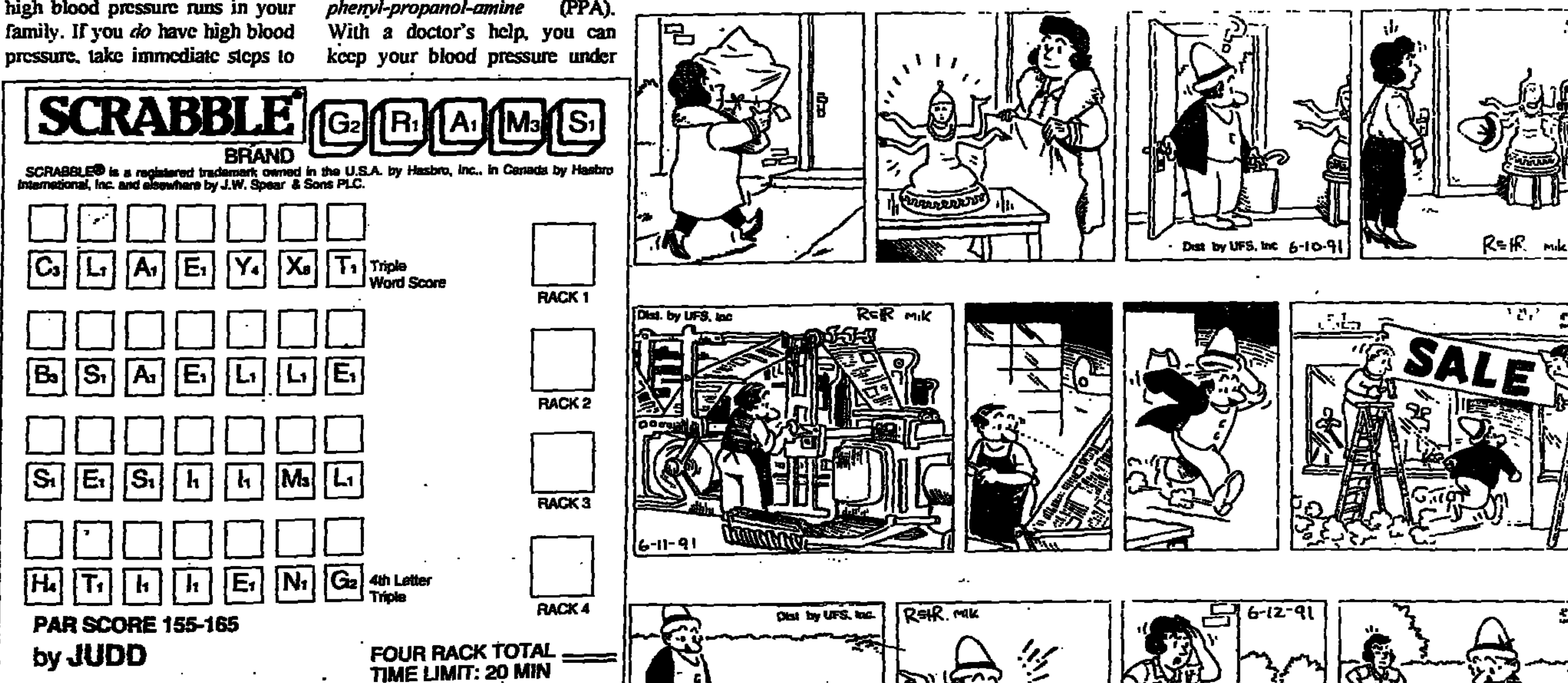
Kay Davies and colleagues at Oxford University's Genetics Laboratory used genetically engineered mice that were missing dystrophin but which produced extra amounts of utrophin, a related protein.

The mice showed much less muscle-wasting than mice simply bred without dystrophin. This could mean that if chemicals were found that could increase utrophin in people, they might be used to treat the disease.

"It remains to be seen if such compounds could be identified," they wrote in the science journal *Nature*.

"However, this approach would potentially target all muscles and thus prolong life by conserving the respiratory and cardiac muscles."

(Reuter)



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B3 S1 A1 E1 L1 L1 E1 — RACK 2

S1 E1 S1 I1 I1 M3 L1 — RACK 3

H4 T1 I1 I1 E1 N1 G2 — 4th Letter Triple — RACK 4

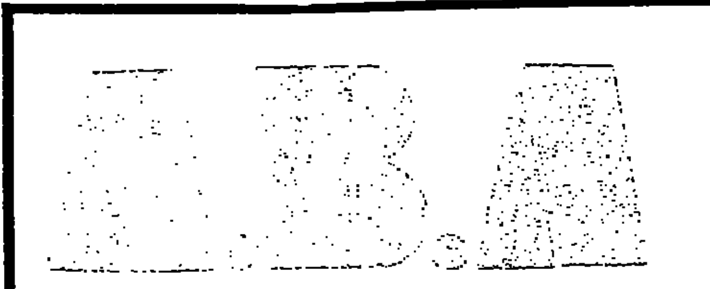
PAR SCORE 155-165

by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL ____
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

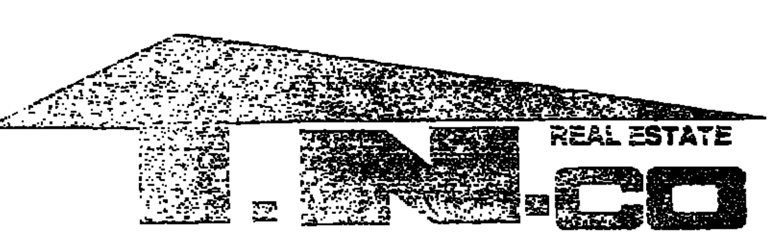
DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7- letter word from the letters in each row. To total points of your words, use scoring directions to right of each row. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words can be found in OSW Official Scrabble Words (Chambers). **JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW**

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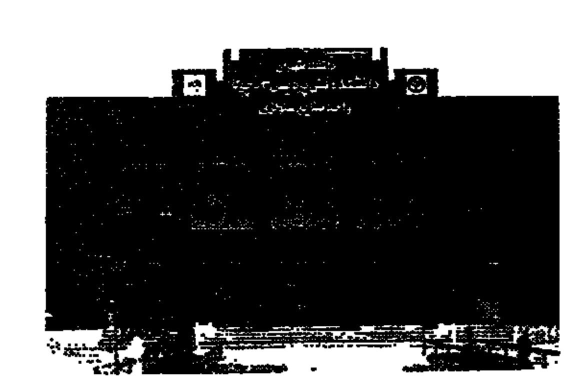


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Pardis 3-Chooka Technical Faculty of Cellulosic Industries Unit Inaugurated





At the Presence of First Vice President, Dr. Habibi

In a ceremony attended by First Vice President, Dr. Habibi, Minister of Industries, Engineer Ne'matzadeh, President of Bank Markazi Iran, Dr. Noorbakhsh, deputy minister of higher education, Gilan governor general, and a number of Gilan representatives in Islamic Consultative Assembly, Pardis 3-Chooka Technical Faculty was inaugurated in Iran Chooka Paper and Wood Producing Complex in the town of Talesh, Gilan Province. In the inauguration ceremony of the faculty, Dr. Aref, dean of the faculty, delivered speech on linking science and industry and then the Minister of Industries, Engineer Ne'matzadeh, put great emphasis on cooperation of industry sector with the country's education sector and called the implmentation of 4 projects of producing paper in the country as the prior plans of the government and added, "The government in its third plan intends to meet the country's needs of paper through increasing the production of paper and implementing and running the underway projects." At the end of the ceremony, Dr. Habibi, first vice president, during his speech expressed his appreciation and gratitude to the Ministry of Industries for its efforts for the establishment of this training unit and emphasized on training expert individuals to meet the scientific needs. It is worth mentioning that the one-story building of Pardis 3-Chooka Technical Faculty enjoys a modular design with an approximate area of 9,000 square meters. In addition to have harmony with the surroundings, it can be expanded in different parts and directions. The building has 3 separate and related departments including general and administrative, training, and welfare and service departments.

Mobile Phone and 156 Post and Telecommunications Projects With Rls.40bn Allocation Inaugurated in Gilan Province

At the Presence of First Vice President, Dr. Habibi



In a ceremony attended by Dr. Habibi, first vice president, Ayatollah Ehsanbakhsh, representative of *Vali-e Faqih* in Gilan, Engineer Gharazi, minister of post, telegraph and telephone, Gilan governor general, provincial representatives in Islamic Consultative Assembly, and other officials and responsible authorities of the province, cellular phone along with 156 post and telecommunications projects were inaugurated. Through exploitation of these projects, the number of telephones run in the province reaches 195,000 lines from 25,000 lines before the Islamic Revolution and the number of villages enjoying communications facilities reaches 1,136 from 17 rural spots in 1978 and also the number of international canals in the province has reached 102 from the previous 12 canals.

Engineer Gharazi, minister of post, telegraph and telephone, delivering speech in the ceremony referred to the great importance of communications role and added, "The intelligent service will be run throughout the country and since the telecommunications system now enjoys Data network, all the towns and provincial centers will be gradually equipped with mobile phones and 10-digit postal code as an intelligent service code (Internet, E-mail, etc.) and in this way any kind of data or communication can be transmitted."

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Chirac's TV Appearance Fails to Boost His Ratings



CHIRAC

PARIS — A Prime-Time TV interview by President Jacques Chirac in which he sought to dispel national gloom and rally France afresh to his policies failed to impress the public, an opinion poll showed.

The poll published in the left-leaning daily *Liberation* indicated that 58 percent of French people found Chirac unconvincing, and 54 percent thought he was wrong to insist on hanging on to Alain Juppe as prime minister.

While as many as two-thirds of respondents credited Chirac with good intentions, a similar proportion felt he was out of his depth when it came to beating unemployment, and less than half thought he had given a clear idea of his aims.

Sixty-three percent found that the president had not managed to make the public any more confident in the future, and 69 percent said his appearance had not improved their image of him.

The poll confirmed the initial disappointed reaction from press and politicians to Thursday night's two-hour interview, eagerly awaited as a chance to probe Chirac over stubborn economic gloom, social unrest and renewed terrorist violence.

Opinion polls since Chirac took office in May 1995 have shown a steady decline in his popularity, dragged down by public discontent with Juppe, who now only enjoys the confidence of around a quarter of the population.

(AFP)

Colombia Puts Punch Back in Antidrugs Bill After Samper Steps In

BOGOTA — After a red-faced President Ernesto Samper personally lobbied lawmakers, Colombia's Congress has agreed to allow the state to confiscate drug traffickers' vast, illegally earned wealth.

It was a big personal victory for the embattled president who has been faced with steady pressure from Washington to take a tougher stand against the illegal drug trade.

That even as he for the past year has denied charges he knowingly took drug money for his 1994 campaign, a charge leveled by his top campaign aides which unleashed a national scandal and calls for Samper to step down.

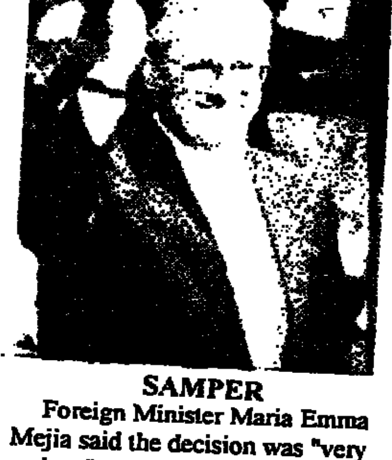
"This law begins a new chapter in the history of the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime in Colombia," Samper's office said in a statement.

This week's woes began late Tuesday, when the Lower House of Congress voted to allow the confiscation of drug traffickers' property, but dramatically softened the bite of Samper's antidrugs bill.

The Chamber of Deputies, dominated by the president's own Liberal Party, voted 59-57 to amend a term of the bill allowing confiscation of convicted traffickers and other criminals' assets to include only those seized after 1991, not before as Samper had proposed.

That would keep most drug fortunes right where they are now, a fact which prompted a public outcry and prompted embarrassed national business leaders to protest.

Full passage of the tougher version of the bill was considered crucial to avoiding decertification again in March 1997, when the United States reviews efforts made by governments of drug-exporting countries, such as Colombia, to stem drug trafficking. Samper's office issued a statement saying the bill's new wording was "insufficient to continue our struggle against drug trafficking and organized crime."



SAMPER

Foreign Minister Maria Emma Mejia said the decision was "very serious" and could take a toll on Colombia's standing in the international community.

After Tuesday's vote, congresswoman Ingrid Betancur charged drug traffickers had bought the votes of lawmakers for between 20,000 and 25,000 dollars a vote. She did not offer proof of the accusation.

The antidrugs bill had cleared the Senate last month, and a conference committee of 15 senators and deputies met to try to reconcile their verions of the bill in a marathon session.

During the day Thursday, Samper kept phone lines buzzing and paid personal visits to lawmakers to try to impress on them the importance of backing the original bill with no retroactivity on asset confiscation.

The effort paid off handsomely, with a late Thursday vote 103-4 in support of the original bill.

Samper is due to sign it into law next week.

The turnabout may be his only harder-line victory: his two other antidrug bills on toughening sentences and resuming extradition are considered virtual nonstarters.

The United States last March "decertified" Colombia for what Washington said was inadequate cooperation in the fight against illegal drug trafficking, making it ineligible for some aid. It also stripped Samper of his U.S. entry visa.

The president has been battling to regain stability for his government and international respect since his election in 1994, when allegations that his campaign was partially funded by drug money first surfaced.

Samper in June was cleared by a congressional panel of charges that he accepted $6 million from the Cali cocaine cartel to finance his election campaign.

In their discussions of the government's antidrugs bill, legislators here have had to come to terms with a series of death threats against them and their families allegedly issued by Cali drug cartel bosses.

(AFP)

Indonesia, Malaysia to Hold Talks on Island Dispute in January

ALATAS

JAKARTA — Indonesian and Malaysian officials are to meet in January in Kuala Lumpur to discuss a territorial dispute over two islands, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said here.

"The two teams will meet in (Kuala Lumpur) the first week of January to discuss the problems," Alatas told reporters after a brief meeting with Malaysian Foreign Minister Ahmad Badawi.

Indonesia and Malaysia both lay claim to Ligitan and Sipadan, two small islands between the Malaysian state of Sarawak and Indonesia's east Kalimantan Province.

In October the two countries decided to take the dispute to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague, the Netherlands, after failing to reach an agreement through bilateral negotiations in recent years.

Alatas said here that no date had been set yet for the ICJ submission, adding that there was a possibility senior officials from both countries would meet a number of times more.

The two ministers met Friday following the conclusion of the five-day ministerial meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which groups 54 countries.

(AFP)

Court Releases Moi's Opponent on Bail, Citing Health Reasons

NAIROBI — A Nairobi court released from jail one of President Daniel Arap Moi's leading opponents, Koigi wa Wamwere, citing his poor health, Kenya television network reported.

Koigi, a former member of Parliament, was sentenced along with his brother and a former army captain to four years in jail in October last year, after being convicted of a raid on a police station.

The trio immediately appealed against the sentences, which sparked concern among the international community. Last month, medical experts said Koigi was suffering from a heart muscle disorder which could result in sudden death, and said the prisoner needed to be flown to either Britain or South Africa for specialized treatment.

Koigi has been under armed guard at a private wing of the Nairobi hospital where even his mother has not been allowed to see him.

Looking frail, Koigi said from his hospital bed: "It was the knowledge of my innocence and the fact that I am still determined to continue the struggle which kept me going.

"I feel great. I am only sad that my brother and brother-in-law has not been released," Koigi said.

Court sources said Koigi's brother Charles Kuria Wamwere and former army captain Njuguna Ngengi, who is related to Koigi by marriage, could be produced in court next Tuesday and subsequently released.

Koigi, who was immensely popular among the poor as a maverick legislator in the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) Party, was detained without charge under the government of the late President Jomo Kenyatta, and spent two years in prison on treason charges under the Moi regime.

He was rearrested in 1990 after several years of exile in Norway, where his wife and children live, and tried for treason.

Moi severed diplomatic relations with Norway from 1990 to 1994 after the Norwegian ambassador attended that trial, which ended when the charges against Koigi were dropped.

Koigi said the authorities chained him to his hospital bed "from day one, to a few moments ago." He was guarded by fifteen armed police and prison guards, who barred anybody from seeing him.

Koigi said he heard about his eventual release "as a rumor" earlier in the day but did not want to take it seriously.

With the release of Koigi, Moi has rid himself of the last of the well-known personalities Amnesty International classified as political prisoners.

However, Muturi Kigano, human rights lawyer and chairman of the unregistered Safina Party, said he hoped there would be no more similar cases in the future.

(AFP)

Ruling Party's Attempt to Install New Premier Blocked by Court

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa — A court blocked an attempt by the ruling African National Congress to install a new provincial premier in South Africa's central free state province.

The Supreme Court in the capital of the Breadbasket Province granted an interim order overturning the ANC's decision to oust popular Premier Patrick "Terror" Lekota and replace him with Ivy Matesepe-Casaburri.

The court order comes after repeated attempts by the national leadership of President Nelson Mandela's Organization to end a protracted and bitter leadership dispute in the province, according to the SAPA news agency.

The ANC decided to shift Lekota from his position after failing to end the row between him and members of the provincial cabinet, some of whom Lekota has accused of corruption.

One of Lekota's arch rivals, Provincial Economic Affairs Minister Ace Magashule, has been implicated by an inquiry in granting unauthorized state loans.

Edmund Qhali, the Lekota supporter who brought the court action against the ANC, argued to the court that Matesepe-Casaburri could not be appointed premier because she is not a member of the Free State Legislature and was not on the ANC's current election candidate list.

Matesepe-Casaburri currently heads the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

The ANC has been given until January 23 to respond to the court order.

(AFP)

Vice-Presitent Criticizes Ruling Party Leadership Over Division

BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe — Zimbabwe's Vice-President Simon Muzenda castigated the leadership of the governing party, accusing it of lacking discipline and fuelling division within the party ranks.

He attacked factionalism in several of the party's provinces, which have seen party rebels winning legislative and municipal elections as independents.

He further accused some members of Parliament from the ruling Zanu-PF Party of virtually setting themselves as an official opposition bent on criticizing cabinet ministers when they present party policies in Parliament.

"Regrettably I observe with shame how the party has lost the essential good discipline. There is so much indiscipline that the top leadership of the party is not spared," Muzenda lamented at a party annual conference.

Muzenda blamed the rampant indiscipline for the growing division and factionalism within the party which holds all but three seats in the 150-strong Parliament.

Speaking at the same meeting, President Robert Mugabe, while admitting the growing division in his party, said efforts to restructure the party have been sluggish thus failing to heal the rifts.

"To our utter dismay, these efforts have not produced the desired results as factionalism continues to rear its ugly head," Mugabe said, adding: "We resolutely condemn this cancerous tendency".

(AFP)

European Parliament Urges Croatia to Respect Press Freedom

STRASBOURG — The European Parliament has urged Croatia to respect the freedom of the press and broadcasters following the closure threat hanging over an independent Zagreb radio station, officials said.

The independence of the media is "of capital importance for the good functioning of a genuinely democratic society," the source said, citing a resolution adopted by European parliamentarians.

The Parliament declared its solidarity with the journalists of radio 101, an enormously popular station which pokes fun at state officials.

Last month the station had its broadcasting concession given to an embryonic rival, but the government later backtracked on the move after 100,000 people marched through Zagreb in protest.

The authorities instead granted the radio station an authorization to transmit until January 1997, pending a renewed invitation to tender.

The European deputies called on the croatian administration to renew this authority before it expires.

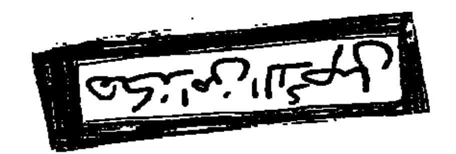
(AFP)

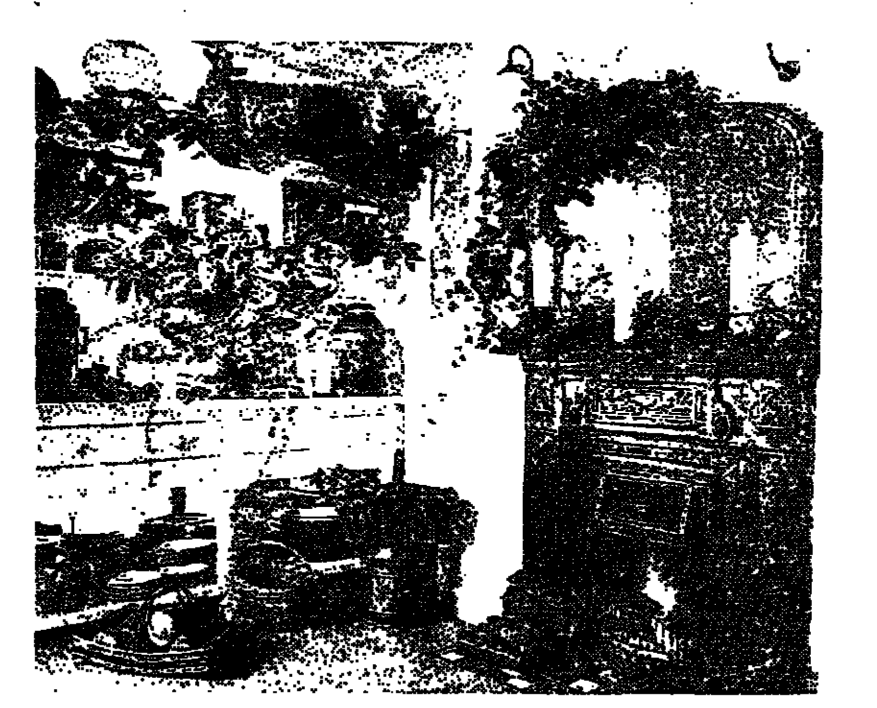
First Shooting Contest Held in Shahid Adibi Training Center

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The first shooting competition was held among the cadre cadets of Islamic Republic of Iran Law Enforcement Forces' training centers in Shahid Adibi Training Center in Marzan-Abad, Chaloos.

The contest took 4 days and Mashhad Samen-ul A'emmeh Training Center, Marzan-Abad Shahid Adibi Training Center, and Karaj Shahid Chamran Training Center ranked first, second and third respectively.

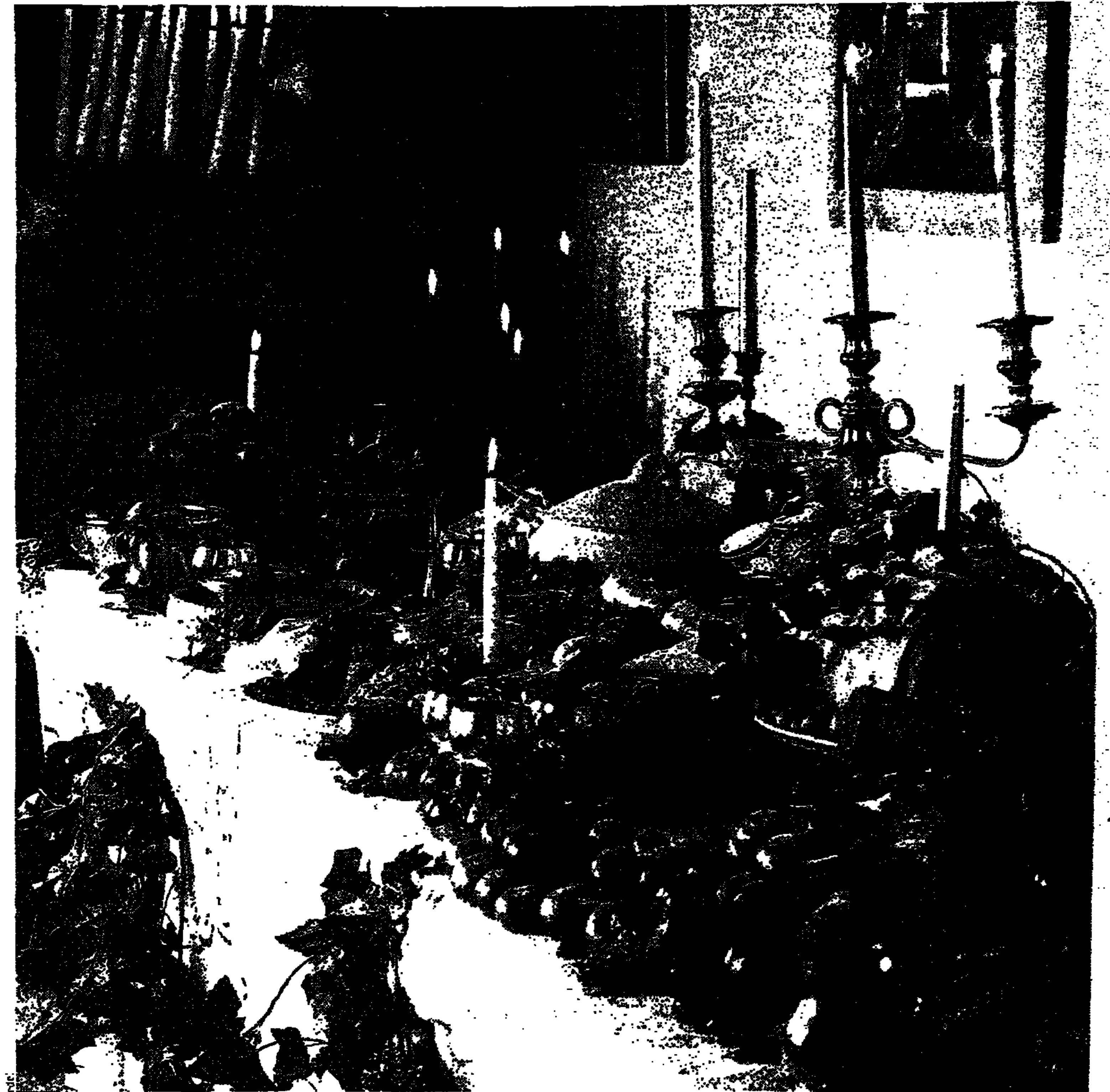




The festive fun starts early for Beverlie Manson, when the preparations get under way for one of her famous parties



"If There's One Thing I Can Do It's a Christmas Tree"



For years now it's been the same in Beverlie Manson's handsome house in Highgate, north London. Ten days or so before Christmas the house begins to buzz with preparations for the annual Christmas party. This is a party famous among friends and relatives and enjoyed, it is blatantly clear, as much by the hostess as the guests.

Up in her study where she designs wallpapers, greeting cards and children's books, Beverlie supervises the ordering and delivery of the food. 'And at the same time I'll be wondering, now where in heaven's name will I find some really good berry holly? And will those huge candles still be there if I wait till tomorrow before rushing out to buy them? And when am I going to fit in getting my hair done? Or get time to finish these borders ....?'

Mercifully, Beverlie is highly organized, and besides she's got two great friends, Bettina and Helen, who come to help, advise and improvise with the decorations. And the decorations are extensive — it's a large Edwardian house with a drawing room that stretches from front to back, a large kitchen — dining room, and five bedrooms.

But before her friends arrive, Beverlie will have given herself her special Christmas treat, she'll have Done the Tree. "I've got quite a reputation for trees," she says, "I always buy a few new decorations every year but otherwise it's the same beloved ones that have gone on for years and years. It's no wonder that I can do a good tree," she says, laughing. "In the course of my design work I do about 300 a year!"

When these friends — Bettina's an artist, Helen an architect — touch down there's no cozy chatting over endless cups of coffee and mince pies. When Beverlie's minimalist style turned, out went the Edwardian, in came a spare elegance, and now the decoration plan is keeping with the new pared-down look of the house. Where before guests had to fight their way through the foliage, now they can stand back and admire the cartwheel carving of the Holy Family in the drawing room. Or warm themselves by the kitchen fire.

Candles and color, says Beverlie, are the key to her Christmas scheme. "You're always in pursuit of really delicious colors, scarlets and rich browns ...."

And color is the secret of the well-stocked table in the warm yellow kitchen. Under the glow of the reindeer candelabra, satsumas sit between red apples, and sharon fruits, kumquats, grapes, nuts and clementines are scattered between





dishes of pies with lots of cranberries.

"Christmas," says Beverlie, "is all about giving a welcome to friends and family. Plus a table creaking under the weight of home-made Irish stew, dauphinoise potatoes, roast leg of pork, quiche and cheeses-well that to me sums up welcome as I hope it does to our guests."

When every bowl and vase has been filled, every last glass polished, every garland titivated and every candle lit, Beverlie, Bettina and Helen, each bearing a glass of drink, retire to Beverlie's bedroom to dress for the party.

"Even if we didn't give the party," says Beverlie, "I'd still have the garlands, the holly and the ivy, the sheer joyous, generous abundance — Christmas comes at the darkest and coldest time of the year, it's up to us to make it as as beautiful and as memorable as we can."

(Courtesy Ideal Home)

Beijing to Rebuild Old Section of City Wall

"His ideas are coming back, another sign of China's opening up. Even ten years ago, no one would have thought of restoring a piece of the wall."

BEIJING — Beijing residents have been gathering pieces of a vanished city wall in a bid to rebuild a section, responding to a call that observers say is an attempt to regain the capital's lost identity.

"The stones are easy to spot by their weight and their size," said Yang Hongjiang, wheeling two large 25-kilogram (55-pound) rocks on a platform on the back of his tricycle.

Yang, 42, who works for the city's sports federation, recalled the days when his grandfather would take him on dinner outings and let him clamber on the wall with other children.

"I can still see it," he said.

Around 40 kilometers (25 miles) long, the wall originally encompassed the old city of Beijing and protected the emperors in the Forbidden City.

By the late 1960s it had all but disappeared, dismantled piecemeal for building materials to supply the city's rampant modernization projects, the most costly of which was the construction of an underground city to be used as a nuclear shelter.

But now residents have taken up the call issued by the city's historical relics administration to extend by one kilometer the only section of the wall that remains standing. The land occupied by much of the original wall is now a busy ring-road.

Every day for the last month, between three and five people arrive at a work site near the old station, carrying two or three stones to a district that is itself being slowly demolished.

Before the city's turbulent recent past took effect, old Beijing had an irreplaceable charm, Yang said.

"It's worth the effort and for today's children it will be more than a vague concept," he added.

The section to be rebuilt dates back to the Yongle Kingdom of the Ming Dynasty (1403-1425), and was preserved by the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) as the eastern boundary between the ethnic Tartar and Chinese cities.

According to French Sinologist Philippe Jonathan, the will to rebuild the wall represented "a reaction to the loss of identity" caused by the fanatical urbanization of recent years.

"This type of response might seem derisory, but it won't be if it is followed by an intelligent program," Jonathan said.

"It's as if people are saying: 'Let's try and put a bit of inheritance back into the identity of Beijing'," he added.

Jonathan pointed to Chinese urban planners such as Liang Sicheng who had been talking about preserving the wall by turning into a promenade since the beginning of the 1950s.

"But their advice was not followed, and Liang was discredited during subsequent "anti-rightist campaigns."

"His ideas are coming back, another sign of China's opening up. Even ten years ago, no one would have thought of restoring a piece of the wall," he added.

(AFP)

Every day for the last month, between three and five people arrive at a work site near the old station, carrying two or three stones to a district that is itself being slowly demolished.



Arab World Produces More Refugees Tha

Tanzanian Security Forces Turn Back Fleeing, Frightened Hutus

RUSUMO, Rwanda — Tanzania's security forces attempted to turn back hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees



fleeing camps on the border with Rwanda and terrified of a possible forced repatriation.

Between 300,000 and 350,000 Hutu refugees have abandoned their camps in northwestern Tanzania since early Thursday and were reportedly heading for neighboring countries for fear of being forcibly repatriated to Tutsi-dominated Rwanda.

However by late Friday a large number of refugees had returned to the area of the camps, the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Nairobi said. Spokesman Paul Stromberg could not set a precise figure for the number of people settled for the night in the Ngara region near camps which they had fled the day before.

UN agencies in Nairobi reported morning that Tanzanian troops and police were heading many of the refugees back to their camps and towards the Rwandan border.

According to a UNHCR official in Geneva, the UN refugee agency wants Rwandan Hutu refugees in Tanzania to return home despite their fears.

The priority is to stop the throngs who deserted camps from dispersing in groups and to speed up their return to Rwanda, the UNHCR coordinator for Rwanda and Burundi, Augustine Mahiga, said.

Kenya has called a summit on Monday to address the crisis in the Great Lakes region where, in total, more than 500,000 refugees are on the move.

In addition to Thursday's exodus, at least 200,000 refugees, and possibly many more, have been on the move for more than a month in eastern Zaire.

Tanzanian security forces set up barriers in the northwest to stop the movement eastwards deeper into the country, Mahiga told a press briefing.

Aid workers said soldiers and police started sending the refugees back. More than 300,000 other Hutus in the Karagwe region, to the north of Ngara, were receiving food and staying put, they added.

At Rusumo, on the Rwandan side of the border from the Ngara region, an AFP correspondent saw about a dozen cars and coaches carrying refugees across from Tanzania in the early afternoon, but there was no indication of a large-scale return.

Tanzanian authorities would not allow journalists over the Rusumo bridge from Rwanda. According to the UNHCR, 1,540 Rwandans returned home voluntarily on Thursday.

A UNHCR spokesman in Nairobi Peter Kessler said late Friday that "tens of thousands of Rwandan refugees were heading towards Rwanda" from Tanzania, but he could not specify when the refugees would cross the border at Rusumo bridge.

The UN World Food Programme in Nairobi said the Tanzanian authorities had also banned relief workers from using roads leading to the refugee camps.

The security forces considered that the camps near Ngara had now become transit centers where refugees would be allowed to remain, but only for the coming night, Kessler said.

In Geneva, Mahiga said that Tanzanian police are supposed to weed out Hutu extremist leaders who have waged a propaganda war to stop refugees going home from the majority of the camp populations, he said.

The UNHCR wants the Rwandans to leave voluntarily, he said.

The Tanzanian government is confident it can ease the situation but the extremists "could react violently" in the face of opposition, although they have no heavy weapons as was the case in Zaire, Mahiga said. Tanzanian authorities say about 800 of the refugees are suspected of taking part in Rwanda's 1994 genocide when more than half a million Tutsis along with Hutu moderates were slaughtered before a Tutsi rebel front seized power.



Most of the refugees who fled the Ngara camps walked about 30 kilometers (some 20 miles) overnight and had been heading early Friday for Biharamulo, about 60 kilometers to the southeast, Mahiga said.

He admitted the UNHCR had lost the psychological battle to persuade refugees to go back and said the end-of-year deadline fixed by Tanzania for refugees to leave had provoked panic in the camps. (AFP)

Arab World Produces Three Times More Refugees Than It Absorbs

CAIRO — The Arab world produces three times more refugees than it absorbs, according to a study presented to a regional conference on populations here this week.

"By the end of December 1995, the Arab World had taken in nearly 588,400 non-Arab refugees while it drove to exile in neighboring countries more than 1,484,000 of its own citizens," the study said.

Abdelhamid el-Ouali, Middle East and Southwest Asia legal advisor for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who prepared the study, said there are 420,000 somalian refugees in Ethiopia and Kenya, and 465,000 Sudanese in Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya and central African republic.

Sudan holds the record with 450,000 refugees on its territory in addition to nearly four million people displaced because of the civil war that has rocked the south of the country since 1983.

But the largest concentration of refugees in the Arab world is held by the Palestinians, who have been forced into exile by successive Arab-Israeli wars since the creation of Israel in 1948.

Of a total of six million Palestinians two-thirds are considered refugees or displaced.

The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in charge of Palestinian refugees estimated in June 1995 that the number of Palestinians in its care at a total of 3,172,641.

Of those, 1.2 million were in Jordan, 517,412 in the West Bank, 683,560 in the Gaza Strip, 346,154 in Lebanon and 338,308 in Syria.

The number of Palestinian refugees outside the region covered by Unrwa was estimated at 516,724 while 500,000 others were said to be in non-Arab countries. "The Arab region has been the most affected in the world by the phenomena of forced population displacements," Ouali said in the study presented at the Arab regional population conference (December 7-12) in Cairo.

He linked this to "four key events": the Arab-Israeli wars, the Algerian war, wars and consequent events in the Horn of Africa and the Persian Gulf war. In 1990-1991, more than one million foreign workers fled Iraq and Kuwait. Twice as many Kurds escaped from northern Iraq and headed for Turkey or Iran in the spring of 1991.

"New practices which conformed more with the Arab-Muslim tradition of asylum" emerged after these population shifts with the help of the HCR, fund drives for refugees — namely in Bosnia — and the easing of immigration policies for asylum seekers.

Ouali noted that Arab countries prefer to generously treat refugees, often through foreign assistance, rather than grant them asylum.

In the case of the Palestinians, this is aimed at not giving Israel any excuse to get rid of the problem.

In 1994 the 22-member Arab League adopted a convention on refugees but only Egypt has ratified it to date, the author said. (AFP)

Number of Executions in 1995 Was Most in 38 Years, U.S. Says

WASHINGTON — Fifty-six men were executed last year, the largest number in 38 years, and 3,054 other inmates waited on death rows at year's end, the Justice Department said in an annual report.

The executions occurred in 16 states and were the most since 1957, when 65 men were executed, the Bureau of Justice Statistics at the department reported. All the 1995 inmates had been convicted of murder.

In the 1930's, by comparison, annual execution totals always exceeded 120 and sometimes approached 200. Since the Supreme Court upheld revised death penalty laws in 1976, a total of 313 people have been executed. Previous capital punishment laws were ruled unconstitutional in 1972.

The prisoners executed last year had been on death row for an average of 11 years and two months, about a year longer than the 31 inmates executed in 1994.

By comparison, the 18 inmates executed in 1985 had been on death row an average of five years and 11 months. The time between conviction and execution has increased since capital punishment was restored. The average wait from 1977 to 1983 was four years and three months.

The growing length of time that condemned inmates postpone execution by appealing convictions was cited by Congress and President Clinton when they enacted legislation earlier this year imposing limits on the appeals that prisoners can take to federal courts.

As of Dec. 31, 1995, there were 2,998 men and 48 women on state death rows and eight men under federal death sentence. All had committed murder.

Twelve states and the District of Columbia have no death penalty. (AP)

Ireland Proposes Tough New EU Measures to Fight Crime and Drugs

DUBLIN — The Irish presidency of the European Union called for urgent new measures to fight organized crime and cross border drug trafficking among the 15 member nations.

Irish proposals to a summit of EU heads of state and government here focused on tighter police, customs and judicial cooperation, including the use of cross-border telephone taps to trap drug smugglers and crime rings.

Dublin's draft proposal to the summit, called for the creation of a "judicial cooperation Working Party to examine organized crime from a practical standpoint."

The Working Party would consist, it said, of "public prosecutors, investigating magistrates, senior police officers and others with extensive practical experience in the fight against international organized crime." It recommended rapid finalization of a draft EU convention on mutual assistance, including "certain basic principles of judicial cooperation and a legal basis for the new cross-border methods of investigation.

"The public has a right to expect effective action against international crime in the EU and to have this facilitated by constructive cooperation between the various agencies and legislative systems," said the statement.

Ireland proposed measures aimed at "curbing drug smuggling on the "Balkan routes," and to "combat and dismantle illicit cultivation and production of drugs within the European Union."

It also urged the summit to adopt stronger measures against "the drug tourism problem within the EU," alluding to France's bitter contention that both hard and soft drugs flow freely into France from the Netherlands, whose drug policies Paris sees as lax.

It called for better and faster exchange of information and personnel among member states, and greater use of liaison officers and "consultation regarding planned action on each side of the border."

"Drug trafficking and organized crime are a threat to the lives, property and future of all European citizens," said Irish Prime Minister John Bruton.

He said the summit's discussion of the Irish proposals "fulfill completely the ambitions we set for ourselves at the start of our presidency" six months ago.

"This shows that the European Union is not just concerned with internal markets, goods and services, but that it has human insight with the capacity to address directly the concerns that people have," he said.

"The common battle against crime is bring the EU closer to the citizens of Europe."

The Irish draft proposal also addressed the "fight against trafficking in human beings and the sexual exploitation of children," saying member states "have undertaken to review their relevant national laws in order to facilitate concerted action." (AFP)





VUKOVAR, Croatia (December 3): Croatian President Franjo Tujman (Center L) and administrator for Eastern Slavonia, Jacques P. Klein (Center R) brief the press at Vukovar's UNTAES camp, here Tuesday afternoon during Tudjman's one-day visit to the region. (AFP PHOTO)

US Wants Watchdog Group to Rally Members Behind Arms Embargoes

VIENNA — The United States and European countries remained at loggerheads on Friday at the first top-level session of an arms exports watchdog as Washington wants the organization to require its members to respect arms embargoes.

While the European members have emphasised the largely technical nature of the Wassenaar Arrangement Organization, the United States has not concealed its intention to create a body which would force its members to respect embargoes on transfer of arms to countries such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, and "unstable regions" in general.

In an interview with AFP Lynn Davis, head of the US delegation here, implicitly acknowledged disagreements, although she said she was "very pleased" so far with the talks, which began on Thursday.

The 33 countries which have joined the so-called Wassenaar Arrangement, set up in July, reportedly still disagree on the role of the organization which was launched after two years of tough negotiations.

Asked about the nomination of a secretary-general which has been the subject of heated debate for more than six months, Davis, U.S. Undersecretary of State for International Security Affairs, said:

"This is an issue which has still to be resolved."

Asked whether there were fundamental differences between the United States and Europe over the scope and functioning of the organisation, Davis said: "Our view is that we want this regime to evolve. We will be pressing our case."

At the end of Thursday's talks, differences focussed on the nomination of a secretary-general and on whether a statement should be published on Afghanistan to identify it as a more "stable" country.

Asked on Friday whether the Afghanistan statement would be agreed upon, Davis replied: "We'll see."

The Wassenaar Arrangement, which groups the European Union, Japan, Russia, the United States and 15 other industrialized countries, takes its name from a suburb of The Hague, where a preliminary framework agreement for the organization was signed in December last year.

The body, which aims to prevent the shipment of arms to countries deemed a threat to peace, is the successor to Cocom — the coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls — a committee of Western countries which controlled the export of sensitive technology to communist states during the Cold War. (AFP)

Clinton Defends His CIA Chief, Natl Security Advisor Nominees

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton defended his nominees for CIA chief and National Security advisor Friday amid questions about their financial dealings and warned the vetting process was turning into a witch hunt.

Both CIA director-designate Anthony Lake and National Security advisor nominee Sandy Berger are being investigated for possible conflict of interest because of stocks they failed to sell off when they joined the administration.

It was the second time in as many days that Clinton defended Lake, whose handling of arms transfers to Bosnian Muslims is also being questioned by the Republicans who must confirm his nomination.

"I am fully aware of the status of the issues relating to Mr. Berger and Mr. Lake," Clinton said in a ceremony to nominate more members of his administation.

"I am convinced that nothing they did was in any way disqualifying because the issues involved were very straightforward," he added.

Lake reportedly had been told to sell off the stocks in 1993 when he became the National Security Council chief but a White House legal advisor found in 1995 the shares were still in his portfolio.

Berger likewise failed to divest some $90,000 worth of Amoco oil stocks when requested initially. Both sold the stocks when they were prodded a second time.

The White House insists it was an honest oversight in both cases, but Clinton voiced some exasperation at the process which may be a turnoff for some potential cabinet members.

"There is no question that the climate has changed to the point where a lot of people don't want to fool with it anymore," he said. "Somebody raises a question, then there's a presumption of guilt. You have to prove yourself innocent of things you're not even sure what the charge is," he added. (AFP)

Attack on Uday Strikes at Saddam's Own Stability

DUBAI — The attack which wounded President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday also struck a blow to the Iraqi government's stability, opposition members said Friday.

Most opposition members said they believe Uday was targetted in a settling of scores within Saddam's extended family where Uday has many enemies, adding only clan members could know where he was and breach his security.

But General Wafiq Samarrai, a former Iraqi intelligence chief who defected to Damascus in 1994, said the attack was probably carried out by an opposition group.

A presidential spokesman said Uday was wounded in a "cowardly attack" on Thursday evening while driving his car through the wealthy Al-Mansur district, but his condition was not cause for concern.

Iraqi radio did not provide any updates on Friday.

An Iraqi opposition member in London, Mohammad Bahr Ulum, said Baghdad's "quick" announcement of the attack could mean "Uday was seriously wounded or that Saddam Hussein is preparing an unprecedented revenge" against the gunmen.

Another opposition member in London, Mohammad Abdel Jabbar, said "Uuday is viewed as the strongman in Baghdad after his father, and (the attack) is the result of conflicts within the family."

"Hitting (Uday) endangers Saddam's regime," said Abdel Jabbar, a spokesman for the opposition Iraqi National Council.

"Uday personally led the attacks that killed his brother-in-law Hussein Kamal Hassan (in February) and wounded in August 1995 his uncle Watban" al-Takriti, said Abdel Jabbar.

Taking revenge against the son of the Iraqi president "is perfectly normal, it did not surprise us."

Bahr Ulum said the "attackers can only be from within the family, whose members are in permanent conflict to control the country's wealth."

"The family controls the country's resources and is the only one to benefit from the resumption of oil exports" under the oil-for-food deal with the United Nations which came into effect on Tuesday, Bahr Ulum said.

It has a grip over the companies which will import and distribute the food and medicine under the deal, despite a massive monitoring system set up by the United Nations, he said.

"The situation is worsening every day and the attack against Uday, a pillar of the regime, weakens the regime," Bahr Ulum said.

Bahr Ulum and Abdel Jabbar said they had no details on the circumstances of the attack. But General Samarrai said he had information that several gunmen ambushed Uday's car.

His visit to Al-Mansur could have been foreseen since he travels there regularly to meet women, he said, adding it was not necessary to be a member of the family to launch the attack.

"Uday is part of the regime and is an important symbol and any attack against him amounts to a hostile act against the government," Samarrai said.

"Uday has given himself the prerogatives of the president. He summons ministers, fires them or blames them without restraint," he said.

"Many unhappy Iraqis believe Uday is his father's successor and don't like this idea. Attacking him could mean they want to eliminate the regime," he said.

Uday has no government position and was dismissed two months ago as head of "Saddam's Fedayeen," a para-military group set up in 1994 to provide another ring of security for the president, Samarrai said.

Other Iraqi sources, contacted from Amman, said five gunmen who ambushed Uday managed to escape. Among those arrested were 200 members of a Republic Guard elite unit, apparently under suspicion, they said.

There was no claim for the attack. (AFP)

Cuba Asks Creditors to Refinance $10.5bn in Foreign Debt

HAVANA — Cuba has asked Paris Club creditors to refinance its $10.5bn in foreign debt, and to help Havana get access to softer credits, according to a National Bank of Cuba report.

The request was made in the most recent National Bank report drawn up in May to which AFP had access. Cuba's foreign debt at the close of 1995 was $10.504bn.

Failing renegotiation, "the country would have to dedicate the entire current value of its exports for seven years to pay off the foreign debt," the report said.

ut with flexibility on the part of Cuba's industrialized government creditors, it would be possible to achieve "access to official credit, reducing the high costs the country has had to face in securing almost 100 percent of its credit on a short-term commercial basis," the report said.

The report added that contacts had been made with Paris Club lenders "to establish a...dialogue that would allow a resumption of analysis of the issue of Cuba's foreign debt."

In 1995, Cuba's external debt surged by 15.6 percent largely due to fluctuations in currency exchange rates.

The debt is held 27 percent in German marks: 21.5 percent in Japanese yen: 17.5 percent in U.S. dollars: 8.5 percent in Swiss francs: 5.8 percent in Spanish pesetas: and 5.2 percent in Canadian dollars, among others.

The report stipulated that the figures do not include obligations to countries of the former Socialist bloc, or special financial arrangements with countries including China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Russia among others.

Of the total foreign debt, $8.18bn is principal, it said.

Cuba's top government creditors are Japan (21.4 percent): Spain (13 percent), France (12.8 percent): Britain (7.8 percent): Argentina (7.7 percent): Italy (5.7 percent): Mexico (four percent): Switzerland (2.7 percent): and Germany (2.3 percent). (AFP)

EU Summit Vows to Support Smooth Hong Kong Transition to Chinese Rule

DUBLIN — European Union leaders meeting here Saturday voiced a "desire to do anything possible" to help in a smooth transition of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty next July 1, but made no mention of its new chief executive appointed earlier in the week.

The EU Summit in a statement reiterated "strong interest in the future peace and prosperity of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China, as the British colony will be known.

"The European Union is committed to strong continuing ties with the SAR in the World Trade Organization and in all other matters where the SAR will enjoy autonomy under the basic law," said the statement.

It stressed the EU's "full support for the specific status of the SAR and its citizens in all respects," alluding to Beijing's "one China, two systems" commitment to maintaining Hong Kong's unique political and economic aspects. (AFP)

Demirel Urges Early Breakthrough in Turkey's Mafia Scandal

ANKARA — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel has asked his prime minister Necmettin Erbakan to accelerate the inquiry into alleged Mafia links with the state, press reports said recently.

"The president wants the matter to be cleared up quickly," Erbakan told reporters after meeting Demirel on Thursday, promising that there would be no cover-up.

"Inquiries are being very carefully carried out. If it's a question of activities against the state by a group, a person or an organisation within the state, it will be absolutely cleared up," he said.

Demirel has held a series of meetings last week to discuss the scandal with Turkey's political party leaders.

The scandal came to light early last month after a car crash near Bursa, western Turkey, in which a former police chief and Mafia boss traveling in the same car with a Turkish deputy were killed.

The deputy, Sedat Bucak, of the government coalition True Path Party, was seriously injured.

The matter has already led to the resignation of Interior Minister Mehmet Agar and several top police officers, including the head of special operations, have been sacked.

Despite his resignation, Agar may still face charges of abusing his office, after the Ankara Prosecutor's Office requested the lifting of his parliamentary immunity.

A document held by the Justice Ministry accuses Agar of having signed a gun license for one Abdullah Catli, the Mafioso who died in the crash.

Catli was wanted in connection with a number of murders and for drug-trafficking.

Bucak heads a pro-government Kurdish militia "Village Guard" in the southeast of the country, set up to protect it from attack by the outlawed separatist Kurdistan workers' party (PKK). (AFP)